

Sadie Robinson speaks to people in Ramsgate about why they oppose Nigel Farage >>Pages 10&11

**'Why we wish Ukip wasn't here'**



Joseph Daher from Syria and Sameh Naguib from Egypt on the Arab revolt >>Pages 14&15

**COULD THE ARAB SPRING RISE AGAIN?**



# Socialist Worker

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## NATIONAL GALLERY

**Gallery workers defiant as they start fresh strike**

A FIVE-DAY strike by workers at the National Gallery in central London has got bosses rattled. Bosses suspended PCS union rep Candy Udwin before the last five-day walkout earlier this month. Workers spoke of the "overwhelming" solidarity they have received.

>>Page 3

## GREECE



**New debt deal turns the screws on Syriza**

EUROPE'S RULERS have imposed a deal on Greece that locks it into austerity for another four months.

People elected radical left party Syriza to get rid of austerity, but the deal stands in the way of its promises.

But workers' struggles can beat austerity—the left must unite behind them.

>>Pages 4,5&6

## UKRAINE

**Crisis deepens on anniversary of Maidan protests**

SOCIALIST Worker reports from Kiev, Ukraine, one year after president Viktor Yanukovich's fall.

As the West and Russia's inter-imperialist rivalry and nationalism tear Ukraine apart, the sense of social crisis is palpable in Kiev.

>>Page 8

Greedy MPs take 'second jobs' as £67,000 just isn't enough to live on

# HOUSE OF SCROUNGERS

THIS WEEK'S cash-for-access scandal proves what a pigsty parliament is as ex-foreign secretaries Malcolm Rifkind and Jack Straw have been caught with their snouts in the trough.

The pair have been caught trying to sell their political influence to businesses. Rifkind's excuse was that it is "quite unrealistic" to expect MPs to live on just £67,000 a year.

>>turn to page 2





## THE THINGS THEY SAY

### 'I'd hoped it was David Coulthard'

A Rolls Royce worker on hearing that VIP guest 'DC' was visiting. It turned out to be David Cameron

### 'Planet of the Apes'

How one cop described Lambeth, south London, after the 2011 riots

### 'What happens when renewable energy runs out?'

Ukip candidate Victoria Ayling gets confused

### 'A tiny blip'

Tory employment minister Esther McVey on the number of young people out of work

### 'I don't wear a nice watch or fancy jewellery'

Celebrity chef Annabel Karmel on the trials of being rich and robbed

### 'Nobody's talking about raising corporate taxation'

Labour's Neil Kinnock reassures the bosses

### 'We agree with Len McCluskey'

An unlikely story about the Unite union leader from Ukip's Bob Smith

### 'Villain of the year'

Awarded to Ukip leader Nigel Farage by NME magazine

# Cash for access sting should be the final straw for MPs

**TORY MP Sir Malcolm Rifkind says it's "quite unrealistic" to expect MPs to live on their salary of £67,000 a year.**

Rifkind along with Labour MP Jack Straw, has been caught up in a cash for access scandal. They offered to work on behalf of a fictitious Chinese company in return for payments of at least £5,000 per day, it was claimed last night.

Rifkind who oversees intelligence agencies for parliament, boasted he had "useful access" to every British ambassador in the world.

The top Tory told undercover reporters he would submit questions to ministers for a paying client.

And Straw boasted he had worked to help change EU rules on behalf of a firm



JACK STRAW and Malcolm Rifkind

which pays him £60,000 a year.

Rifkind registered earnings of £69,610 outside of Parliament. He said, "I am self-employed—so nobody pays me a salary. I have to earn my income." He said his usual fee for half a day's

work was "somewhere in the region of £5,000 to £8,000".

Straw trousered £112,777. Of 180 MPs with additional jobs, 112 are Tories, 43 are Labour and 15 Lib Dems.

MPs declared more than £7.4 million from outside work and second jobs in the

past year. Some 30 members declared at least the equivalent of an MP's £67,000 salary in extra work.

A dozen were paid more than David Cameron, who gets £142,000 for being prime minister.

Gordon Brown, the former prime minister, declared additional income of close to £1 million. Geoffrey Cox, the Conservative MP, declared earnings of £820,000—12 times the annual MP wage.

As Jack Straw with great foresight said in 2010 "Their behaviour, prima facie, does indeed bring the Parliamentary Labour Party, as well as parliament, into disrepute, because it appears that former Cabinet ministers are more interested in making money than they are in properly representing their constituents."

**TORY ERIC Pickles has attacked Sheffield council for spending around £687,116 on translation services between 2011 and 2014.** Pickles claimed this "holds people back from integrating into British society". He himself has a much better way of spending money, having spent £536,801 on limousines between 2012 and the first half of 2014.



Good value for money?

**KRISPY KREME had to apologise last week after its Hull shop branded a children's half term club KKK.**

Unfortunately the initials are better known for US Nazi group the Ku Klux Klan.

Krispy Kreme has "taken down the sign from our point of sale" and is "investigating".

## Stop press! Some women have greys

ANOTHER WEEK, another royal scandal splashed on the tabloid front pages.

This time it's news that Kate Middleton may have some grey hair.

"Oh Kate, are you really showing grey roots at 33?" exclaimed the Daily Mail.

An article went on to complain that Kate was only "a relatively youthful 33".

The Mail also had some delightful

advice for women who want to stay looking young—put lipstick under your

eyes to hide dark circles.

**MARGARET Thatcher** was an unlikely believer in flower power, says Pinkoes and Traitors, a new BBC history.

Thatcher asked for "the right-coloured flowers" to be on any set she came on, preferably blue hyacinths.

Top BBC executives agonised over whether it would show bias.

But they deemed it was fine so long as Labour got any floral decor they wanted as well.



Gawd bless her

## Anti-racist victory has got Ukip rattled

**POOR MARK Gough.** The failed Harlow Ukip candidate has lashed out at Stand Up to Ukip campaigners for costing him the seat in a by-election this month.

Gough moaned, "There was a stop-Ukip demonstration and they were putting leaflets through doors which were full of lies. "It was all clearly damaging."

**THE bigots** claim that "Ukip has a zero

tolerance approach to tax avoidance, no matter how important you think you are".

Nigel Farage set up an offshore trust in the Isle of Man. Farage backed party supporter Stuart Wheeler who argues "not all tax avoidance is bad".

Aaron Banks gives lots of cash to Ukip. It comes via a company which paid just £12,000 corporation tax on a turnover of £19.7 million and is owned via a tax haven.



Farage and Banks



## FAT CAT OF THE WEEK

No. 863

**Tony Blair**  
Millionaire warmonger

● Serbia has become the latest country that Blair is being paid to "advise"

● His government bombed the country in 1999

● Blair makes millions from "advising" states

● Serbia's ruler Aleksandar Vucic previously rejected Blair as "too expensive"



# 45

private dinners ministers had with business and hedge fund bosses in last three months of 2014

# £40<sub>MN</sub>

cash the bosses have donated to the Tories since the last election

## I'm poor too, says Binyamin Netanyahu

**BINYAMIN Netanyahu**—he's just like one of us really.

And to prove it the Israeli prime minister made a video showing his modest home.

In the film his wife Sara claims they had no cash to fix upholstery before Barack Obama visited—forcing him to sit on a coffee-stained couch.

Netanyahu is under pressure after a watchdog criticised his "excessive" spending of public money on himself.

Unfortunately the video backfired after it transpired it actually showed his servants' quarters, not his home.



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# Gallery workers defiant as they begin a fresh walkout

by ANNETTE MACKIN

**A FIVE-DAY strike by workers at the National Gallery in central London has got bosses rattled.**

The PCS union members began their walkout last Sunday. It is the second five-day strike they have staged in their fight against privatisation.

The action forced some events at the gallery to be cancelled—which has got management worried.

A spokesperson for the gallery attacked the strikers on the first day of their walkout.

They said the action was having a “negative impact” on events for young children and children with special education needs.

But strikers are clear that it is bosses’ attacks on the workforce that are damaging, with plans to privatise 400 out of 600 jobs.

Management has also backed off from promises to pay the London Living Wage, meaning that the gallery is the only one in London that doesn’t pay it.

And on the eve of workers’ first five-day walkout earlier this month they suspended union rep Candy Udwin.

Candy joined strikers on the picket line on Sunday morning outside the gallery.

## Overwhelming

Workers spoke of the “overwhelming” solidarity that the dispute and Candy have received.

Over 8,000 people have signed a statement calling for her reinstatement.

Trade unionists and campaigners have also taken pictures of themselves with posters demanding, “Reinstate Candy”.

Delegates at last Saturday’s Unison south east regional council are the latest to show their support.

Supporters visited the picket line



VICTIMISED UNION rep Candy Udwin (front) joins National Gallery strikers

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## HELP THE STRIKE:

- Invite strikers to your union or campaign meeting—email [noprivatisationatNG@gmail.com](mailto:noprivatisationatNG@gmail.com)
- Donate to the strike fund—sort code 086001, account number 20169002
- Make cheques payable to Culture Sector Hardship Fund, c/o PCS North West Region, Jack Jones House, 1 Islington, Liverpool, L3 8EG
- Download #ReinstateCandy poster at [bit.ly/reinstatecandy](http://bit.ly/reinstatecandy)

too. On Sunday a Unite union construction rep brought a £500 donation to the strikers.

Andy Reid, a PCS branch secretary at an HMRC office in central London, also came to the picket line to show support.

He told Socialist Worker, “PCS members are inspired to see people fight against the tide of privatisation and the attacks on the idea of a public service.”

Andy said that there was also a lot of anger at the treatment of Candy.

“People are disgusted at the attacks on a union rep that echo the government’s general attacks on union democracy as a whole,” he said.

Strikers planned to hold a national day of action in support of the dispute on Thursday of this week. They will march following a rally outside the National Gallery at 1pm.

Talks between the union and bosses were due at conciliation service Acas on Tuesday of this week.

The union has drawn up alternative proposals to bosses’ plans.

Strikers were set to demonstrate outside the BBC Culture Question Time on Tuesday of this week.

## What’s your story?

Email with your ideas [reports@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:reports@socialistworker.co.uk)

## Scot cops search scandal

SCOTTISH POLICE carried out more than 600,000 stop and searches in 2013-14.

Officers said that only 30 percent were due to suspicious behaviour—a legal requirement when demanding a search.

Recent investigations in the Scottish parliament and the Herald newspaper have embarrassed the cops.

People in Scotland are four times more likely to be stopped than in England and Wales.

Police tried to block research into the figures.

About 500 children under ten years old were

frisked in 2010. Police Scotland announced last June last year that searches of children under 12 had stopped. But 356 have taken place since then.

When the high number of searches first emerged Scottish Police argued that they were just better at recording than other forces.

Now they claim officers are not well trained.

When 20,086 records of stop and searches went missing they said it was because someone “pressed a wrong button.”



A cop in Glasgow

## IN BRIEF

### Cops ‘lied’ over Hillsborough

DR NIALL Wilson told the Hillsborough football disaster inquests he “knew police had lied”.

He saw a steward with an officer open a gate at the stadium, but the media claimed fans forced it open.

The inquests continue.

For more see [socialistworker.co.uk](http://socialistworker.co.uk)

### Sick claimants face new tests

PRIVATE contractor Maximus is set to start testing one million sick and disabled people to see if they are “fit for work”.

Atos Healthcare previously tested Employment Support Allowance claimants.

### Jail plan means overcrowding

PLANS BY the Scottish National Party to scrap automatic early release for prisoners would make jails more cramped.

The Scottish Prison Service predicted that inmate numbers would rise by about 400 over the next decade, breaching the design limit.

### Cardiff march against bigots

ABORTION RIGHTS activists in Cardiff, South Wales, plan to mark International Women’s Day with a March for Choice on 8 March.

Activists are taking on bigots from 40 Days for Life, who’ve begun picketing a Bpas sexual health clinic.

Assemble 12 noon, 8 March, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP

International Socialism day school

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## IN THIS WEEK

# 1991

### Ceasefire declared in US war on Iraq

THE US officially ended its first war on Iraq on 28 February 1991.

The war killed an estimated 50,000 Iraqis and wounded 100,000. The US declared victory after 100 days—and left behind a devastated, unstable country.





# New Greek deal turns the screws on Syriza

As a European Union deal locks Greece into austerity, workers plan more protests, writes Dave Sewell

**EUROPE'S FINANCE** ministers have imposed a deal on Greece that locks it into austerity under its creditors' control for another four months.

The “Troika”—the European Union (EU), European Central Bank (ECB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF)—has imposed austerity for the last five years after bailing out the bankers.

The radical left party Syriza was elected last month to get rid of the Troika and austerity.

But the agreement signed on Friday of last week gives these three institutions a veto over any reforms that would begin to roll back the austerity regime.

## Bargaining

They were considering a list of reforms as Socialist Worker went to press.

This includes taxing the rich, and increasing the minimum wage, but also pushing ahead with privatisation.

But the deal stands in the way of Syriza's promises to workers. It can keep some only at the expense of others—such as rehiring sacked cleaners but leaving positions in already understaffed hospitals unfilled.

Prime minister Alexis Tsipras said

## BACK STORY

**Radical left party Syriza was elected last month promising to end austerity**

●The “Troika”—the European Union, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund—is imposing austerity

●Syriza wanted to renegotiate Greece's debt

●The new deal signed last Friday allows the Troika to veto reforms

●But workers' struggles still have the power to challenge the bosses and bankers

in a TV address, “We won a battle, but not the war.”

But German finance minister Wolfgang Schauble gloated that they would have “a hard time explaining the deal to Greek voters”.

The Greek government was under immense pressure, with £5 billion of debt repayments due at the end of this month.

This is when its bailout agreement was due to end—and a run on Greek banks gave the deadline extra force.

Now the Greek government has until June to reach a new deal on its debt.

Syriza supporters say this has

**Protesters in Athens demand an end to austerity**

bought them some time. But it has bought the Troika time too—and with Syriza on the defensive it can be expected to make use of it.

There were two calls to protest against the deal made on Thursday. Activists linked to the Indignados movement called one, while the anti-capitalist left coalition Antarsya called another.

## Protests

Panos Garganas, editor of Socialist Worker's Greek sister paper Workers' Solidarity, said, “The main demand is to reject the deal, and Antarsya links this with defaulting on the

debt, leaving the EU and taking over the banks.

“It's not clear if everyone from previous protests will be there, or if those most loyal to Syriza will abstain.”

University workers last week said they would call a strike on the day of their union's first meeting with the new education minister.

Manolis Stathoupolos from Thessalonica, northern Greece, is one of over 2,000 school guards sacked by the last government. He told Socialist Worker, “I think we will get our jobs back.

“If everything we've heard is true,

then I think this is the first victory against the EU.

“But the people expect a lot more—and we will keep protesting. We can't live without money, and we want to tell the people of Europe, ‘we want our freedom.’”

Panos said, “Workers' struggles for their demands are what can beat austerity. The left—including the critics inside Syriza—must unite behind them.”



## On other pages...

Greece deal is about more than just debt >>Page 6

## Syriza MEP slams new deal

SYRIZA MEP and well-known anti-Nazi resistance veteran Manolis Glezos was the first to slam the deal.

In a withering statement he wrote, “Renaming the ‘Troika’ as the ‘institutions’, their ‘memorandum of understanding’ as an ‘agreement’ and the ‘lenders’ into ‘partners’ doesn't change the situation.”

Glezos called for



Manolis Glezos

urgent opposition inside the party. He wrote, “The people voted in favour of what

Syriza promised—to remove austerity.

“There can be no compromise between oppressor and oppressed.”

Syriza MEP Sofia Sakorafa—the first MP to quit the Labour-type Pasok party over its support for austerity—and leading Syriza economist John Miliotis quickly endorsed Glezos' statement.

## Migrants march on parliament

by KATERINA THOIDOU, Movement Against Racism and the Fascist Threat

HUNDREDS OF Greeks and migrants marched on parliament chanting “close the camps, open the factories” on Thursday of last week.

There were other protests around Greece.

More than 4,000 prisoners are locked up in Guantanamo-type prison camps in Greece.

They face torture and there are also allegations of rape.

Their only “crime” is that they're migrants and refugees.

These prisoners hoped the new government would free them. They have revolted twice since the election.

Two prisoners have died, one from illness and another from suicide.

But the new police minister said they will only give “supervised” freedom—the kind normally given to criminals—to those inmates who have served six months.

Pushing for the closure of the camps and other migrant rights will be one of the main demands on the anti-racist demonstration on Saturday 21 March.

We are also demanding an end to the European Union's “Frontex” border control system.

Activists are pushing for the fascist Golden Dawn's leaders to be tried and jailed, and for its supporters to be purged from the police and judiciary.

## Workers' struggle has power to defy bankers

**POLITICIANS CLAIM** that ordinary people in other countries will suffer if Greece doesn't pay the debt.

But they've slashed jobs and services all over Europe. Even in Germany 12 million people live in poverty thanks to a vicious wage squeeze.

The bankers who lent money to Greece in pursuit of profit before the crisis have already been paid back.

Yet Syriza finance minister Yanis Varoufakis went into the “Eurogroup” finance ministers meeting pledging to pay it back in full—just not too quickly.

He hoped this compromise would win allies. But Dutch Labour-type social democrat Jeroen Dijsselbloem was as relentless as the German Tories.

The Spanish, Portuguese and Irish governments face difficult elections. They couldn't stand Greece showing that there's an alternative to the austerity that they've been imposing.

Social democratic governments in France and Italy



Dutch minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem

are attacking workers' rights.

While there was little hope of a break with austerity inside the meetings, millions oppose it outside.

In Greece, strikes and occupations have blocked job cuts, kept hospitals open and stopped electricity being cut off to the poor. Mass protests brought governments down.

If those working class struggles deepen, they represent a power far greater than the bankers and bureaucrats.

**Socialist Worker**  
WHAT WE THINK

## ONLY CLASS STRUGGLE CAN BREAK THE BOSSES

**W**ORKERS around the world took hope from the radical left party Syriza's victory in Greek elections. But weeks later that hope is wearing thin.

Syriza signed up to a compromise with Europe's rulers which falls short of its most moderate aims.

For the mainstream media, the moral is that it's not worth trying to take on the bosses and bankers.

The debate on the left is almost as gloomy. For some it's a sellout. For others there was no chance of getting anything better.

But look at this situation from the bosses' point of view.

Our rulers depend on using

How many times have union leaders built up strikes only to sign some shoddy deal? How often are we told to swallow our disappointment with Labour—or the Scottish National Party—or risk getting something worse?

Socialists standing as part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in Britain and Antarsya in Greece argue that something better is still possible.

And it is.

Differences between left and right wing politicians matter.

So do negotiations between the Greek government and its creditors.

But they're far from the most important part of the picture.

The one force that can liberate humanity is the working class.

Working class life can feel like a series of humiliating reminders that we are powerless.

Where and how we live is dictated by what the market has to offer. If we step out of line we're demonised or repressed.

Fundamentally, our survival depends on selling our ability to work for whoever will hire us.

But look at this situation from the bosses' point of view.

Our rulers depend on using

“**Strikes and mass demonstrations open the door to a glimpse of workers' strength**”

Sir Malcolm Rifkind, the top Tory at the heart of the scandal, said it's “unrealistic” to expect MPs to live on this salary.

Yet the Tories slash benefits to give people more “incentive” to work.

A poor person trying to earn more money faces a raft of laws and regulations aimed at keeping them poor. MPs face no such rules—and David Cameron has promised he won't introduce any.

Cameron has complained that benefit claimants have a “sense of

our labour to generate profits.

Without workers to exploit, banks' wheezes and the politicians' manoeuvres come to nothing.

This divide between workers and bosses lies at the heart of the system—and the fight against it. As the revolutionary socialist Rosa Luxemburg put it, “Where the chains of capitalism are forged, there they must be broken.”

Bosses trying to divide us, terrify us or buy us off is a recognition of our potential power.

They know they'd be finished if they couldn't keep us down.

Those who try to help workers by winning office or carrying out individual direct actions can be important allies. But they are up against a system they can't break. US socialist Hal Draper called this “socialism from above”.

In contrast, “socialism from below” recognises Karl Marx's argument that “the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves”.

Strikes and mass demonstrations open the door to a glimpse of workers' strength.

Any hope of socialism must come from pushing it open.

## ONE LAW FOR THE RICH

**T**HE LATEST MPs' scandal shows that there's one law for the rich and another for the rest.

Some 180 MPs have “second jobs” helping them rake in around £7.4 million a year.

Yet they rage against so-called “benefit fraudsters” who try and supplant their meagre income by earning the tiniest fraction of what MPs rake in.

Many unemployed claimants get just £67 a week while MPs grab £67,000 a year—plus expenses.

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German finance minister Wolfgang Shauble (left) told Syriza finance minister Yanis Varoufakis that he wants Greece's total surrender



## ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



## Greece deal is about more than just debt

**THERE WAS something very peculiar about the agreement thrashed out between Greece's radical left Syriza-led government and the Eurogroup of finance ministers.**

There's nothing odd about protracted negotiations, reconvened meetings and cliffhangers.

But usually the parties try to present the final deal in ambiguous terms, so that everyone can claim victory. Yanis Varoufakis, the Greek finance minister, did try to spin the agreement this way, talking about "constructive ambiguity".

This is despite the fact that he had been forced to apply for a renewal of Greece's "bailout" under the supervision of the hated Troika of the European Commission, European Central Bank (ECB), and International Monetary Fund—things he had ruled out only a few days earlier.

But Varoufakis's main antagonist, German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble, did the opposite. He sought to rub in Syriza's humiliation after the deal was struck on Friday last week. "The Greeks certainly will have a difficult time to explain the deal to their voters," he said.

So why has Germany taken such a hard line? It's not because of the money. Nobody seriously believes Greece can repay its vast £249 billion debt. It's what the debt makes possible. As the academic Slavoj Žižek put it, "the true goal" is "the indefinite continuation of the debt that keeps the debtor in permanent dependency and subordination."

One of Schäuble's senior officials told the Financial Times newspaper, "If we go deeper into the debt discount debate, there will be no more reforms in Europe. There will be joyful celebrations in the French presidential palace and probably in Rome, too, if we go down this path."

In other words, what Germany is worried about is continuing with the programme of neoliberal reforms that have been imposed on Greece, Ireland, Spain, and Portugal.

### Bargaining

Germany and the European Union (EU) are trying to generalise these through the EU on the basis of the March 2012 Fiscal Pact. "Reform" in the context means cutting and privatising public services, undermining workers' collective bargaining power, and the like.

A mixture of motives lies behind the fixation on "reform". As we have seen in Britain, one ruling class reaction to the crisis has been to use it to radicalise neoliberalism—restructuring societies to entrench the dominance of the "free" market that precipitated the crisis in the first place.

But there are defensive motivations as well. During the 2000s the German ruling class overcame a long period of stagnation and rebuilt the export economy by squeezing wages.

They fear this model may be undermined if economies shattered by the crisis are rescued by government intervention financially underwritten by the EU.

Hence the drive to use the bailouts to generalise the German model. In southern Europe, where the competition comes from east Asian economies with much lower labour costs, this means a brutal squeeze on living standards.

Syriza's election victory represents a mortal threat to this project. If austerity were rejected in Greece, this would give an enormous fillip to Podemos, the new radical left movement in the Spanish state, and encourage greater resistance elsewhere in Europe.

So Syriza has not only to be beaten, it has to be seen to be beaten. Of course, its multitude of supporters have been busy pointing to silver linings in Friday's deal.

There may be wriggle room for Varoufakis in the list of "reforms" he must submit to the Eurogroup for approval. And maybe Greece will be allowed to spend a bit more.

Let's hope so. But Germany has a powerful weapon in the Greek banks, which are leaking money. Last week the ECB threatened to cut off the aid that keeps them alive.

The Financial Times newspaper quoted a "senior international banker" saying, "They are squeezing them on everything, it's part of a system to suffocate them, to make them realise the end is coming, to realise it is time to get on their knees."

This is by no means the end of the fight. But it should be the end of the illusion that austerity can be ended by negotiating with the EU. Only mass struggles can beat it.

# Tories use a panic over Isis to clamp down on Muslims

Politicians are in a frenzy over three teenagers alleged to have left to join Isis, writes **Judith Orr**

**THE FAMILIES of three east London school students who have travelled to Turkey to try and get into Syria have made a public plea for them to return.**

The three young women, Shamima Begum, Amira Abase and Kadiza Sultana, attended Bethnal Green Academy in east London.

One of their friends there left to go to Syria three months ago.

They are assumed to be intending to join sectarian Islamist Isis forces in Syria. Isis is fighting Syrian dictator Bashar Al-Assad and Western bombing.

There have been calls for yet more police surveillance of young Muslims to stop them travelling to join Isis.

But this case has shown just how much surveillance these young people are already under, for instance on Twitter.

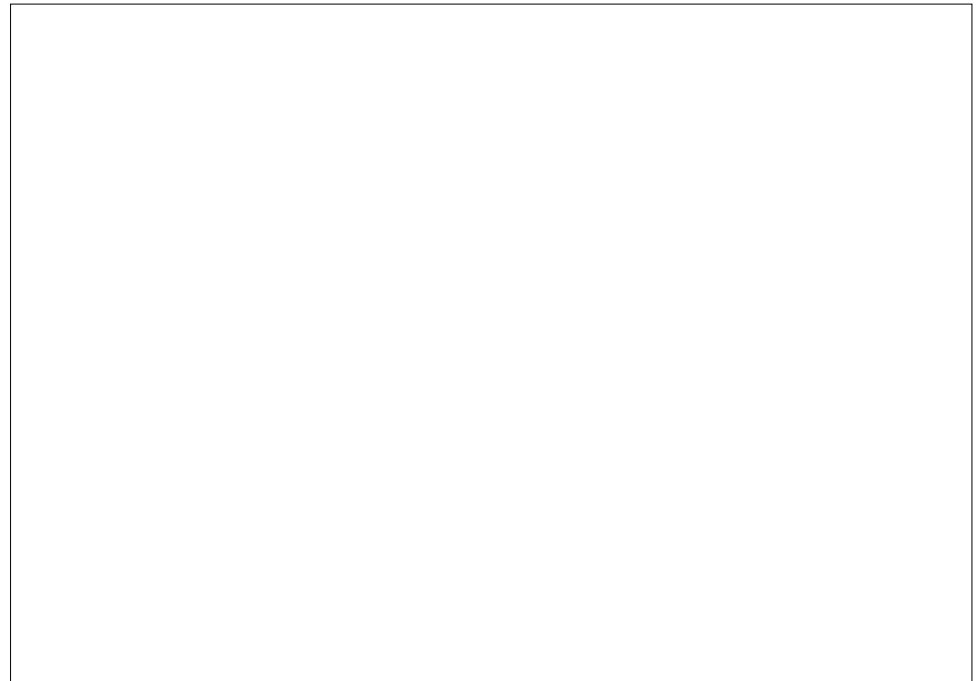
Surveillance won't stop people wanting to join Isis.

### Politicised

Many young Muslims have become politicised by opposition to Western imperialist wars, and because they face racism and police harassment.

Halima Hassan is from Newham and is active in her local Stop the War group.

She attended a meeting about the situation with Rushanara Ali, MP for Bow and Bethnal Green, where the young women came from.



Halima told Socialist Worker, "It is really sad what has happened to the girls."

"But people are very worried, very scared about what will happen now—the school and the teachers are going to be under investigation."

"People think that this will make Islamophobia even worse."

For all the calls for the young women and other

**ISIS PARADE in Syria (above)—panic over support for Isis in Britain will encourage more Islamophobia (left)**

British Muslims to return from Syria there is no incentive for them to do so.

The state will treat them as terrorists and they could face arrest if they try to return.

Another London Muslim teenager, 19 year old Brusthom Ziamani, faced a jail sentence after a court found him guilty of "preparing a terrorist attack".

The police admitted he was "vulnerable". He was under surveillance on the day of his arrest and found to be carrying a knife and a hammer.

Brusthom became a Muslim four months earlier and was kicked out of his home. He said he joined the Islamist group Al Muhajiroun "because they were giving me

places to stay and they did not like moderate Islam".

He said he posted threats on Facebook to "fit in" with them. Brusthom will be sentenced next month.

Contrast the treatment of Muslims going or considering going to fight in Syria with that of white ex-bouncer Tim Locks.

He has sold everything to fight against Isis in Iraq. He has been interviewed live on television news as a principled hero.

There is no talk of him being arrested as a terrorist when he returns to Britain.

**Got a story?**  
Email ideas to [reports@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:reports@socialistworker.co.uk)

## Fossil fuel firms paid climate denier

by **DAVE SEWELL**

**A PROMINENT climate change denier was exposed last week as having received around £800,000 from the fossil fuel industry.**

Wei-Hock Soon has starred in conferences, been interviewed on TV, and been brought in to testify in the US congress and state governments.

Almost all scientists agree that human activity has caused carbon emissions which lead to global warming.

But Wei-Hock Soon



A fracking site in the US

blames it on the sun. In at least 11 papers he failed to disclose the conflict of interest his receipt of the money caused.

Soon's work has often been questioned. But it is useful for those who profit from pollution.

Meanwhile, the Tories are determined to push through fracking.

This will lead to more carbon emissions.

Campaigners are preparing to march in London next month to demand the government takes action on climate change.

**TIME TO ACT**

on climate change

**Saturday  
7 March**

Assemble 12.30, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A

Demonstration called by the Campaign Against Climate Change

Details at [timetoact2015.org](http://timetoact2015.org)



# Anti-racists can shape election, conference told

by ANNETTE MACKIN

**OVER 400 people attended the Unite Against Fascism (UAF) conference in London last Saturday.**

Speakers from across Europe addressed workshops and plenaries throughout the day—and stressed the importance of building the 21 March demonstrations.

Christine Buchholz, an MP from the left wing Die Linke party in Germany, spoke of the rise in Islamophobia across Europe.

The anti-Muslim Pegida movement grew rapidly in Germany in recent months, holding a number of demonstrations that numbered in the tens of thousands.

But now it is in crisis after a series of successful anti-racist mobilisations pushed it back.

On 21 March there will be protests in London, Cardiff, Glasgow and also in Athens, Rome, Barcelona, Dresden and Paris to rage against racism.

Christine urged people to continue to build the movement that divided Pegida and make links across Europe.

She said, “Pegida’s success was the tip of the iceberg of anti-Muslim racism and hatred against refugees which remains widespread, and will continue.

## Mobilisations

“So it is important we continue our mobilisations. We want to take to the streets and show we are the ones that do not have to be afraid.”

The call for the Europe-wide protests originally came from anti-fascist activists in Greece.

Nasos Iliopoulos from Syriza’s central committee and Petros Constantinou from anti-racist coalition Keerfa both spoke of the threat of the fascist Golden Dawn in Greece.

Petros said, “The Nazis are the legacy of racist politics against immigrants.

“The international movement is very important—we have to put an end to racism. We will resist austerity and we will resist racism together.”

Fighting back against the tide of racism in the run-up to the general election in Britain was the theme of the Standing Up To Ukip workshop.

Labour MP Diane Abbott attacked the attitude of some in the Labour Party who are chasing the racism of Ukip.

She said she was “worried” by a tendency in Labour to “out Ukip Ukip”.

She explained, “Some Labour Party people will say, ‘Oh Diane, you don’t understand Ukip isn’t really about race.’ But when was



SYRIZA MP Nasos Iliopoulos addresses Unite Against Fascism conference

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

the debate around immigration not about race?

“Nothing is gained from moving to the right on immigration.”

Weyman Bennett, joint secretary of UAF, spoke in the plenary on Uniting against Islamophobia, Antisemitism and fascism after the attacks in Paris, Copenhagen and Chapel Hill.

He said that anti-racists have the chance to shape the debate in the run up to the election. “On 21 March we need to take to the streets to achieve this. Six weeks before the election, everyone has to go and shape what is going to happen.

“Let’s make sure the streets of cities across Europe are filled with anti-racists and anti-fascists making a stand.”



## More on line

For more on the fight against fascism go to [uaf.org.uk](http://uaf.org.uk)

## Newcastle against Pegida

**SUPPORTERS OF the Islamophobic group Pegida plan to hold an “anti-Muslim” protest in Newcastle this Saturday.**

But local students, trade unionists and other anti-racists are organising a counter-demonstration to oppose them.

Newcastle Unites is organising the anti-racist protest, supported by UAF. It is backed by unions including the FBU, Unite and Unison northern region.

Daniel Kebede is a teacher in Newcastle and been helping build the demonstration. He said the mood is “positive” around the city.

“We’re building a broad base to make sure that they do not go unopposed, and to keep the momentum so that we can build for an anti-racist festival in May,” he said.

Some 70 people attended an organising meeting on Wednesday of last week which some racists tried to disrupt.

Simon Hall of Newcastle Unites said, “They wanted to intimidate us—but we are quite clear that they are not wanted here.”

Assemble Saturday 28 February, 10am, next to the Gallowgate entrance to Chinatown. On Facebook look at the page Newcastle Unites Against Pegida

## NEWS

### Health trusts in financial crisis

TOP BOSSES at Barts Health NHS Trust in east London resigned last week amid a growing financial crisis. Chief executive Peter Morris and chief nurse Kay Riley went a fortnight after it reported a £93 million budget deficit.

The situation is a result of bosses’ determination to push through a damaging merger of three east London NHS trusts.

It is part of a wider financial crisis. NHS foundation trusts’ deficits nearly doubled to £321 million in six months, according to a report from the watchdog Monitor.

Many trusts are sinking into



NHS protest last September

debt partly because of crippling agency staff bills.

No mainstream party is committed to providing the funding the NHS needs.

So health unions were wrong to call off planned walkouts last month. They are balloting on a pay proposal and will strike on 13 March if it is rejected.

The Unison ballot ends on 2 March. The GMB consultation was set to end this week.

**Defend London’s NHS rally** Tuesday 10 March, 7.30pm, Hammersmith Town Hall, King St, London W6 9JU. [defendlondonnhs.wordpress.com](http://defendlondonnhs.wordpress.com)  
**999 call for the NHS convention** Saturday 28 February, 11.30am to 5.30pm, Hammersmith Town Hall 999callforthe.org.uk

### Labour defector stands for TUSC

ANDREW CLAYWORTH, a former Labour parliamentary candidate, will stand for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in the general election in Nottingham South.

He represented Labour against Tory Ken Clarke in Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire, in the 2010 election.

Andrew told Socialist Worker, “I was a member of the Labour Party for years. But I felt it had gone too far to the right.

“So I went to a TUSC meeting and I was quite impressed by the people who were there. They’re true socialists.”



## IN BRIEF

## Israeli army opens floodgates

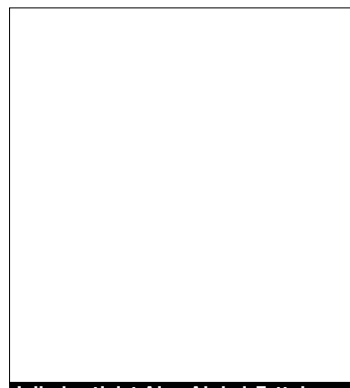
ISRAEL FLOODED sections of the Gaza Strip when it opened the floodgates of dams near the border last Sunday, Gaza's Civil Defence Directorate (CDD) reports.

At least 80 homes were flooded and hundreds of Palestinians were forced to evacuate after the floodgates opened without warning.

"The [Israeli] army opened the floodgates of a canal leading to central Gaza," stated the CDD. "Opening the levees to the canal has led to the flooding."

Gaza has been hit by a number of floods since the Israeli assault last summer.

The bombardment destroyed more than 100,000 Palestinian homes, as well as sewage and drainage systems.



Jailed activist Alaa Abd el-Fattah

## Activists jailed by Egyptian court

LEADING EGYPTIAN activist Alaa Abd el-Fattah was sentenced to five years in jail and a £8,600 fine after a retrial in a Cairo court on Monday of this week.

Alaa was sentenced along with 19 others who received up to three years. Their lawyers will appeal this new sentence.

They were all arrested in 2013 under a law which outlaws protests that take place without the permission of the military.

They had been demonstrating against the law and the introduction of military courts for civilians. Their families and supporters in the court chanted in protest after the verdict.

## Thousands join US oil strike

OIL REFINERY workers in the US have been on strike for nearly a month in a dispute about pay and safety.

The walkout grew last week as around 1,000 more workers downed tools. There are now 6,550 workers on strike.

The nation's largest site, the Port Arthur Refinery in Texas, joined the walkout last week. Some 15 refineries are now taking part.

## Ukraine crisis deepens on Maidan anniversary

by TOMÁŠ TENGY-EVANS  
in Kiev, Ukraine

**A BLAST ripped through a demonstration in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv last Sunday, killing two and injuring ten people.**

It was one of many rallies commemorating the fall of president Viktor Yanukovich last year following protests in Kiev's Maidan square.

Up to 10,000 people packed Kiev's Independence Square and its surrounding streets on Friday of last week.

They had come to remember the "Heavenly 100", who armed police and snipers murdered on the night of 20 February 2014.

This was Ukrainian oligarch president Petro Poroshenko's show of unity, and confirmed that the party of war dominates in Kiev.

It was a grotesque nationalist spectacle as cries of "Glory to Ukraine" filled the square before the crowd sang the national anthem.

People mainly waved the Ukrainian flag, but some also held the red and black flag of the fascist Right Sector. Poroshenko drummed up nationalist support for the war and denounced "fifth columns".

There were small signs of discontent. Parts of the crowd began chanting, "War, war, war", but others shouted them down as "provocateurs" and "idiots" putting unity at risk.

## Separatists

The Ukrainian government has been fighting Russian separatists since last April. But Poroshenko's Anti Terrorist Operation (ATO) is failing as the army stumbles through crises.

Men in military fatigues with collection boxes hung round their necks stand on Kiev's street corners beside shopping trolleys. They're raising money to buy equipment and supplies for the ATO.

Neither side is strong enough to deliver the killer blow.

European and Ukrainian leaders signed a ceasefire deal with Russian president Vladimir Putin to withdraw heavy weapons from the frontline.

But both sides fought about where that frontline would be. The Ukrainian army suffered a humiliating withdrawal in Debaltseve.

They finally agreed to withdraw heavy weapons last Sunday. But the nationalist division will remain entrenched whether there's an official ceasefire or not.

Ukraine's ruling class has always attempted a balancing act between the West and Russia.

In the east, the oligarchs were tied to Russian markets while in the west they favour more integration



UKRAINIANS GATHER in Kiev's Maidan Square last week

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

with the European Union (EU).

The Maidan protests were officially about a deal with the EU. But anger against the oligarchs and police brutality fuelled them.

Yet illusions in the EU and the market, and Ukrainian nationalism, allowed the western oligarchs to benefit. Russia couldn't tolerate Ukraine going into the West's orbit, so aimed to keep it destabilised.

## Crisis

This rivalry will not benefit ordinary Ukrainians—and the sense of social crisis is palpable in Kiev.

People have set up makeshift street stalls made from old boxes selling all manner of homemade foods. Some hold out fag packets selling individual cigarettes.

This crisis was never about democracy or Ukraine's independence, but who will profit from the divisions.

This rivalry between the two imperialist blocs is tearing Ukraine between East and West.

We have to stand against our rulers' sanctions and attempts to send arms.

But it will take independent revolt from below that challenges both nationalisms and imperialisms to shift this situation.



## On other pages...

Could the Arab Spring rise again?  
>>>Pages 14&15

## French government attacks workers' rights

FRANCE'S centre-left government resorted to extraordinary measures to push a new attack on workers through parliament last week.

Economy minister Emmanuel Macron's "bill for growth" involves over 100 measures to erode workers' rights to boost bosses' profits.

These include increasing Sunday working, making it easier to lay off staff and reducing bosses' obligations to workers when they close down workplaces.

Macron told the media that unemployed people should expect to "fight" to get work.

The law has bitterly divided the Labour-type Socialist Party and its allies.

So prime minister Manuel Valls used a measure in the French constitution that allows the government to avoid a vote in parliament on a law.

Only a motion of censure that could bring the government down can block it.

The Tory opposition put forward such a motion, but

## Economy minister Emmanuel Macron

other than six MPs from the Front de Gauche, none of the government's left critics voted with them.

Three union federations called a general strike against austerity—including measures in Macron's bill—on Thursday 9 April. A fourth was considering joining them.

But the biggest federations refuse to come out against the "pact of responsibility" Hollande signed with top bosses in 2013.

Dave Sewell



## We need homes

ON AVERAGE a person living in London would need to save for an incredible 29 years just to put down a deposit on a property.

So I'd have to save till I'm 60 before I could afford a mortgage.

And that's considering I have a job in the meantime.

Well at least Tory pension attacks mean we'll all be working well into our 60s anyway so no need to worry about being a pensioner without a home, right?

We cannot afford to live in the city. Young workers in London are in desperate need of homes.

Emma Davis  
North London



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Just a thought...

## Our solidarity is our strength

I WAS on the bus on my way to a Greek solidarity rally in London on Wednesday of last week, with a rather large NUT union banner.

I mentioned to the bus driver that I was taking it to demonstrate "for the Greeks". He responded, "It's not just for the Greeks—it's for the whole working people."

Good point.

Miriam Scharf  
East London

## A song for the Craigavon Two

POL MACADAIM a singer songwriter from County Louth, has written a song called Justice for the Craigavon Two.

It highlights the ongoing miscarriage of justice of John Paul Wootton and Brendan McConville.

Their case is due before the Supreme Court soon and the launch of the single will take place on the 15 March. We call on everyone to join the #DownloadJustice campaign.

Patrick Carty  
County Tyrone

## Avoiding the real tax issues

I AM furious that the tax evasion scandal has turned into whether a person who does an odd job declares it for tax.

My mum used to pay a bloke cash in hand for jobs. He wasn't able to continue work in construction because he broke his back after building the M4.

Bosses fought paying compensation and he lived on a pittance.

And he's being compared to the super rich tax-dodging chums of the Tories?

Michael Holland  
South London

## Get your facts right on rich

I CAME across what I believe is an error.

Socialist Worker (Socialist Worker, 21 February) reports that top bosses are on £3.3 million a year.

Incidentally the High Pay Centre has their pay on £4.7 million.

This is £1.4 million more than the figure you state, which I think is a lot of money.

Dick Pitt  
Sheffield

## Thanks for the support

DEFENCE SUPPORT Group (DSG) workers voted to accept an improved pay offer last week.

This was after we struck for 16 days last year.

During our dispute Socialist Worker was one of the only papers to cover our strike and get the feelings of the workers involved.

Paper sellers regularly attended our picket lines in the early hours and brought with them the support from their various workplaces and union branches.

We will be ever grateful to those comrades who came to sell the paper and stood by us on our picket.

And we must thank Socialist Worker for its continued support during our strike.

DSG Donnington Shop Stewards' Committee  
Telford

# The cuts and corruption behind the abuse scandal

AS SOMEONE who works in child protection services it was refreshing to read your report (Socialist Worker, 21 February) on the Rotherham child sex abuse scandal.

Sadie Robinson referred to Louise Casey's recent investigation, which identified institutionalised discrimination against victims of abuse.

The resulting corruption with abuse of power and collaboration between officers and perpetrators is sickening.

None of this is highlighted in the media, but remains a stark reality. There is also silence about the financial cutbacks.

The cuts are treated as a fact of life to a point where we are not

permitted to even identify the impact or argue against them at work.

Social workers are often overwhelmed by caseloads. They offer huge amounts of their unpaid time to ensure children are safe.

But they have few resources available to really change the conditions that produce the risk of abuse.

The scale of the crisis is hidden from view but very real.

The media and mainstream politicians are painting a pre-election picture of stability and economic recovery.

Yet they are all preparing to make even deeper cuts to health and social welfare than we have

already seen. Their great lie must be thrown back at them—alongside the poverty and the fear is real and widespread anger.

And that's where we can find hope.

We must use the election period to shout against injustice from the rooftops.

We must organise mass resistance to austerity and stop all the cuts to health and social welfare.

That's why I'm organising with the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.

And thank you for highlighting the real issues around the abuse scandal.

Tony Staunton  
Plymouth

## Learning important lessons from Malcolm

I ENJOYED Ken Olende's powerful piece on Malcolm X visiting Smethwick (Socialist Worker, 21 February).

Most shocking is that it could have been written today—a racist election campaign with the Labour Party failing to confront the racism.

We campaigned against Ukip in a recent by-election in Harlow, Essex.

We worked with some Labour members but had to

have serious debates with some. Eventually we were successful and Ukip lost their seat.

The article shows the importance of fighting together.

Ukip's racism is primarily directed at European migrants. Our campaign was led by black and white people who understood that an attack on one is an attack on all.

Adam Cochrane  
Essex

## We demand justice for Henry Hicks

THERE'S BEEN a lot of outrage over the death of Islington teenager Henry Hicks who died after being chased by the police in December last year.

The 18 year old crashed his scooter into a parked car after being pursued by cops in unmarked vehicles.

The four constables involved in the pursuit have been served with gross misconduct notices.

Details are coming out from people who knew Henry who say he was

Henry Hicks

"constantly harassed" by the police.

Over 1,000 people turned out to attend his funeral earlier this month—and anger at the cops is high.

Graffiti saying "Police killed Henry Hicks" has sprung up on walls across the borough, including on HMP Pentonville, schools and even an Islington council van.

His family and friends have set up a campaign demanding justice—and I urge people to get involved.

Join on Facebook [on.fb.me/1z1mj6r](https://www.facebook.com/1z1mj6r) and sign the petition [chn.ge/1zQnqpH](https://www.change.org/p/1zQnqpH).

Dean Ryan  
North London





Clockwise from above: Ukip's office in Ramsgate, the famous beach, a Love Music Hate Racism festival in Ramsgate in 2011 (PICTURE: KELVIN WILLIAMS), the job centre, amusement arcades, and train station PICTURES: SOCIALIST WORKER

Ramsgate in Kent is at the heart of the constituency where Ukip's Nigel Farage is standing to become an MP in May. Sadie Robinson spoke to people in the town about the reality of their lives and why they oppose Ukip and its racist scapegoating



**T**HANET HAS the highest unemployment rate in Kent. And more than a quarter of its children live in poverty. Politicians from different parties have failed to make any real changes to ordinary people's lives.

And now Ukip leader Nigel Farage hopes to capitalise on the poverty and disillusion in the South Thanet constituency to get elected MP in May.

In Ramsgate, one of the biggest towns in the constituency, there's a steady flow of people into the job centre. Farage likes to blame migrants for unemployment.

But not everyone has bought his racist rhetoric.

Angelina Hammond has been out of work for seven months.

"I don't like Nigel Farage at all," she told Socialist Worker. "All the stuff about immigration does my head in."

"What about people seeking refuge from other countries? If wars were going on here, we'd want other countries to help us."

Steve is also out of work in Ramsgate. He told Socialist Worker,

"I think Farage is a Hitler-type person. "The way he's blaming Muslims and foreigners for everything. It's all about divide and conquer."

Ukip has repeatedly claimed that it is not racist. But not everyone is convinced.

Mary Knott works in a charity shop three doors up from Ukip's Ramsgate office, which stands empty. She told Socialist Worker, "I have great reservations about Ukip. There's an undercurrent of something a bit sinister there."

Mary remembers Ukip MEP Janice Atkinson calling a local Thai woman a "ting tong". "It tells you something about the party," she said.

People in Ramsgate face real problems. Steve described how he'd had no money for nine months after his benefits were cut off.

"I had to beg and borrow to get by," he said. "They treat you like a piece of meat."

John has been out of work for nearly six months. "There's no industry here anymore," he told Socialist Worker.

"There used to be manufacturing and Pfizer. That's gone. The docks

shut and so has the airport. I used to work in a shop but it closed down."

John added that things were even worse for young people in Ramsgate. "The youngsters down here have got nothing," he said. "I feel sorry for them."

**Struggling** Politicians tell us that anyone can find work if they try hard enough and right wing papers repeat this line.

Some of those struggling to get by themselves have accepted this rhetoric—and have been persuaded to lash out at others in the same boat.

**“There's no industry here. Pfizer's gone. The docks shut and so did the airport**

Sharon told Socialist Worker, "This is a really recessed area. But people can find jobs if they wanted to."

Yet Sharon only works ten hours a week, cut from 12, because she can't find anything else. "I need to be working 30 hours a week," she said. "I'm looking for more work."

Many have similar stories.

Paris Shabazz has been unemployed for seven months. In that time he has had one job interview—where he was offered just two hours' work a week.

"You see jobs advertised but then you find out

the job is not there," he told Socialist Worker.

"It's very hard to find work. And sometimes I'm told I'm overqualified as I have two degrees."

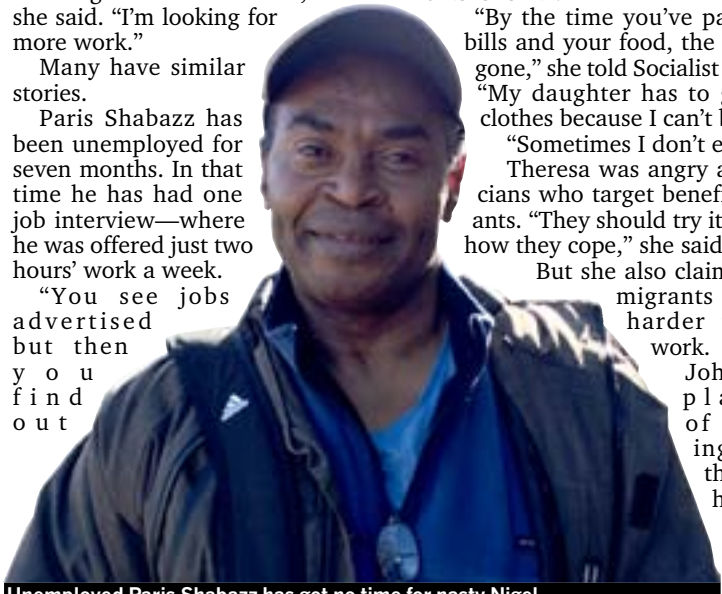
Theresa Martin said living on benefits is "shit".

"By the time you've paid your bills and your food, the money's gone," she told Socialist Worker. "My daughter has to give me clothes because I can't buy any."

"Sometimes I don't eat." Theresa was angry at politicians who target benefit claimants. "They should try it and see how they cope," she said.

But she also claimed that migrants make it harder to find work.

John complained of walking down the street hearing people who "don't speak



Unemployed Paris Shabazz has got no time for nasty Nigel

## GET INVOLVED



**Protest at Ukip's spring conference in Margate**

**Saturday 28 February**

Assemble 12 noon, Margate train station

Called by Stand Up to Ukip

For more details go to standuptoukip.org

English".

It's clear that the potential is there for Farage to divert bitterness at poverty and unemployment towards migrants.

And racists seem emboldened by his presence. Paris told Socialist Worker, "One man said to a friend of mine, 'Wait until Farage gets in. You nig nogs will be out.'"

He added that Farage is "very conniving".

"There is an opportunity for him to get in because people want something to change," he said. But voting for him will just make things worse."

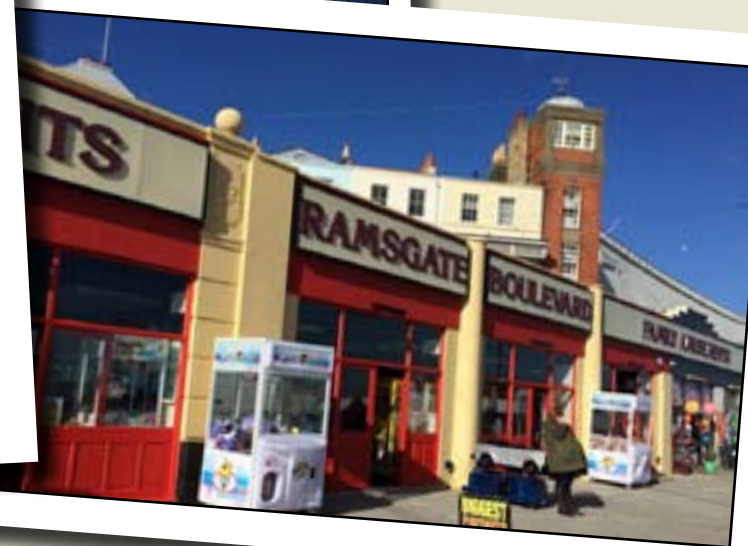
## Nonsense

The idea that migrants are to blame for unemployment is nonsense.

In Ramsgate the idea that "migrants are taking all the jobs" makes even less sense—over 95 per cent of the population is UK-born. Migrants make an easy scapegoat, especially with the constant scare stories from media and politicians.

"The media is scaring people," said Paris. "Sometimes people blame migrants out of ignorance."

"But it's also peer pressure. People



## ‘We’ve a chance to stop Farage becoming an MP’

Aram Rawf came to Britain seeking asylum from Iraq in 1999.

He lives in Broadstairs, part of the South Thanet constituency, and has been involved in the Stand Up To Ukip campaign since it began.

Aram told Socialist Worker, "At the start Ukip had more support in the area."

"But over time more scandals have come out that show what they really think."

"A lot of the younger generation are clear they want to oppose Ukip. The mainstream media gives the wrong impression."

"They come to Thanet and interview people at the Ukip office."

"Then they say everyone in South Thanet is for Ukip. It isn't true."

Aram's own history shows that South Thanet is not a racist monolith.

When the authorities tried to deport him in 2006 local people launched a big campaign to defend him—and won.

But he said that many people in South Thanet are sick of mainstream politicians and want an alternative.

"Basically people are looking for a change," he said. "But Ukip isn't it. It is trying to break society apart."



Iraqi refugee and Stand Up to Ukip campaigner Aram Rawf

Aram is in no doubt about Ukip's racism. He describes going to one of their first meetings in Margate and hearing Ukip members talk of "no-go" areas for white people. "Ukip has definitely made racists more confident," he added. "It's dangerous."

But Aram thinks that campaigners can stop Ukip and urges others to get involved.

"I'm going to speak at the Stand Up To Ukip demonstration in Margate on 28 February," he said.

"I'm proud to speak at it. We've got a chance to stop Nigel Farage going to parliament. It will be a big victory."

## ‘Immigrants didn’t cause Thanet to be a poor area’

NORMAN THOMAS is editor of ThanetWatch, which is campaigning against Ukip along with Stand Up To Ukip.

He spoke to Socialist Worker about the real reasons for unemployment in Thanet.

"I came to live here in 1991. There were almost no migrants. And we had the same huge problem of unemployment then as we do now."

"Thanet has been let down by both the Tories and Labour."

"Migrants didn't cause unemployment or cause Thanet to be a poor area."

"A lot of people who lived in Thanet used to work in the Kent mines or had family who did—that's all gone. Thatcher destroyed huge chunks of the economy."



ThanetWatch editor Norman Thomas

"Now some who are disillusioned see Ukip as a protest vote. But there's nothing new about them."

"Farage is a Thatcherite. Ukip is a racist, nasty party made up of the worst kind of ex-Tories."

# RAGE AGAINST RACISM

Demonstrate on  
**Saturday 21 March**

**London**  
Assemble 12 noon  
Portland Place

**Glasgow**  
Assemble 11am  
George Square

**Cardiff**  
Assemble 11.30am  
Clare Gardens, Riverside



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7819 1170 for more information

## { SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

### GLASGOW

#### A rebel's guide to Eleanor Marx—Socialism and Women's liberation

International Women's Day public meeting. With Siobhan Brown, author of A Rebel's Guide to Eleanor Marx, Angela McCormick, trade unionist and Glasgow North TUSC candidate, Ayesha Saleem, anti-racism activist and Edinburgh East TUSC candidate. Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, Jury's Inn, 80 Jamaica St, G1 4QG

## { SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

### ABERDEEN

#### Why do we oppose fracking?

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm, The Snug, Ma Cameron's, 6-8 Little Belmont St, AB10 1JG

### BARNSELY

#### Can we stop climate change?

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm, YMCA, Blucher St, S70 1AP

### BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

#### 50 years since his assassination—the legacy of Malcolm X

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm, Priory rooms, Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull St, B4 6AF

### BOLTON

#### 50 years since his assassination—the legacy of Malcolm X

Wed 4 Mar, 6.30pm, Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood St (off Bradshawgate), BL1 1DY

### BRADFORD

#### How do we fight Islamophobia and the rise of the far right in Europe?

Wed 4 Mar, 7pm, Equity Centre, Perkin House, 82 Grattan Rd, BD1 2LU

### BRIGHTON

#### Rich versus poor—the British economy today

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Ship St, BN1 1AF

### BRISTOL: NORTH

#### Putin, Ukraine and the West—are we heading for a new Cold War?

Thu 5 Mar, 7.30pm, The Canteen, 5th Floor, Hamilton House, 80 Stokes Croft, BS1 3QY

### BRISTOL: SOUTH

#### Greece after the elections—can Syriza bring change?

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, YHA, Narrow Quay, BS1 4QA

### CAMBRIDGE

#### Isis and counter-revolution—a Marxist analysis

Thu 5 Mar, 7.30pm, Shanghai Family Restaurant, 39 Burleigh St, CB1 1DG

### CARDIFF

#### Putin, Ukraine and the West—are we heading for a new Cold War?

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, Cathays Community Centre, Cathays Terrace, CF24 4HX

### CHELMSFORD

#### The roots of racism

Thu 19 Mar, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Rainsford Rd, CM1 2QL

### CHESTERFIELD

#### Pride, politics and protest—a revolutionary guide to LGBT liberation

Thu 5 Mar, 7.30pm, Market Halls, Market Place, S40 1PB

## ANTI-RACISM PUBLIC MEETINGS

# Stand up to Racism



PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

### LANCASTER

Wed 11 Mar, 7pm, Olive Bar, Gregson Centre, 33 Moorgate, LA1 3PY

### LONDON: HACKNEY

With Diane Abbott MP, Maz Saleem and Jo Cardwell. Tue 3 Mar, 7.30pm, The Round Chapel, Powerscroft Rd, E5 0PU. Sponsored by Hackney NUT

### LONDON: TOTTENHAM

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, Day-Mer Centre's Tottenham Hall, 22 Moorfield Rd, N1 6PY

### LONDON:

WESTBOURNE PARK Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, Paddington Arts Centre, 32 Woodfield Rd, W9 2BE

### MANCHESTER

Wed 25 Feb, 6.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount St, M2 5NS

### SHEFFIELD

Tue 3 Mar, 7pm, Central United Reform Church, 60 Norfolk St, S1 2JB

## PROTEST ON SATURDAY 21 MARCH

[standuptoracism.org.uk](http://standuptoracism.org.uk)

### COLCHESTER

#### How radical are the Greens?

Tue 3 Mar, 7.30pm, The Odd One Out, 28 Mersea Rd, CO2 7ET

### COVENTRY

#### Are Syriza and Podemos the future for the left?

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, West Indian Centre, 159 Spon St, CV1 3BB

### DERBY

#### Putin, Ukraine and the West—are we heading for a new Cold War?

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm, West End Community Centre (next to Britannia Mill), Mackworth Rd, DE22 3BL

### DONCASTER

#### Why we celebrate International Women's Day

Wed 4 Mar, 7pm, Women's Centre, 21 Cleveland St, DN1 3EH

### EDINBURGH

#### Eleanor Marx, socialism and the fight for women's liberation

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, EH1 2JL

### ESSEX

#### The bloody history of British imperialism

Thu 5 Mar, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Rainsford Rd, Chelmsford, CM1 2QL

### EXETER

#### Do we need system change to stop climate change?

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm, New Horizon Cafe, 47 Longbrook St, EX4 6AW

### HARLOW

#### From coal mines to call centres—how the working class has changed

Thu 5 Mar, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 1 Church Leys, CM18 6BX

### HUDDERSFIELD

#### How can we defend education against the market?

Wed 4 Mar, 6.30pm, Brian Jackson House, 2 New North Parade, (near train and bus stations), HD1 5JP

### IPSWICH

#### Can socialism come through parliament?

Tue 3 Mar, 7pm, Labour Club, 33-35 Silent St, IP1 1TF

### KIRKCALDY

#### Syriza, the Greek elections and the fight against austerity

Mon 9 Mar, 7.30pm, Betty Nicol's Pub, 297 High St, KY1 1JL

### LANCASTER

#### Do we need system change to stop climate change?

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm, Friends Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, LA1 1TX

### LEAMINGTON SPA

#### Do workers have the power to change the world?

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm, The Fox & Vivian, 32 Clarendon Avenue, CV32 4RZ

### LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

#### Why is the NHS in crisis?

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm, The Swarthmore Education Centre, 2-7 Woodhouse Square, LS3 1AD

### LIVERPOOL

#### The roots of racism

Wed 4 Mar, 7pm, Brink Cafe, 21 Parr St (near Concert Square), L1 4JN

### LONDON: BRENT & HARROW

#### 50 years since his assassination—the legacy of Malcolm X

Thu 12 Mar, 7.30pm, The Pepperpot Centre, 1a Thorpe Close, Ladbroke Grove (very close to the station), W10 5XL

### LONDON: BRIXTON

#### Are Syriza and Podemos the future for left?

Wed 4 Mar, 7pm, Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd, facing Windrush Square), SW2 1EP

### LONDON: EALING

#### Do we need system change to stop climate change?

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, W3 Gallery, 185 High St, Acton, W3 9DJ

### LONDON: HACKNEY

#### Are the media all powerful?

Thu 5 Mar, 7.30pm, The Round Chapel, 2 Powerscroft Rd (corner Lower Clapton Rd), E5 0PU

### LONDON: HORNSEY

#### AND WOOD GREEN

#### How did Hitler come to power?

Wed 4 Mar, 7.45pm, West Indian Cultural Centre, 9 Clarendon Rd, Haringey, N8 0DD

### LONDON: ISLINGTON

#### Sexism and the system

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm, The Old Fire Station, 84 Mayton St, N7 6QT

### LONDON: KINGSTON

#### How radical is the Green Party?

Wed 4 Mar, 7pm, Kingston Quaker Centre, Fairfield East, KT1 2PT

### LONDON: LEWISHAM

#### Do we need system change to stop climate change?

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, West Greenwich Community and Arts Centre, 141 Greenwich High Rd (near Greenwich main line and DLR Station), SE10 8JA

### LONDON: NEWHAM

#### Marxism and religion

Wed 4 Mar, 7pm, Stratford Advice Arcade, 107-109 The Grove (next to Morrisons car park), E15 1HP

### LONDON: SOUTHWARK

#### How do we fight racism and Ukip?

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm, The Grand Union, Snug Room, 26 Camberwell Grove (off Camberwell Church St), SE5 8RE

### LONDON: TOTTENHAM

#### How radical are the Greens?

Wed 11 Mar, 7.30pm, Kitabevi Cafe, 410 Tottenham High Rd, N17 9JB

### LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

#### From civil rights to Ferguson—the legacy of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X

Wed 4 Mar, 7pm, Oxford House, Derbyshire St (opp Bethnal Green Rd Tesco), E2 6HG

### LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

#### How radical are the Greens?

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, Quaker Meeting House, 1a Jewel Rd (off Hoe St), E17 4QU

### MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

#### How did Hitler and the Nazis come to power?

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm, Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount St, M2 5NS

### MANCHESTER: CHORLTON

#### International Women's Day—Marxism and the struggle for women's liberation

Wed 4 Mar, 7pm, Proof Bar, 30 Manchester Rd, M21 9PH

### MANCHESTER: LONGSIGHT AND LEVENSHULME

#### 50 years after Malcolm X—why his legacy still matters

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, Food Factory, 884 Stockport Rd, Levenshulme M19 3BN

### MEDWAY

#### Isis and counter-revolution—a Marxist analysis

Thu 5 Mar, 7.30pm, Riverside Creative Hub, Conference Room, 13 Military Rd, Chatham, ME4 4JG

### NEWCASTLE

#### From civil rights to Ferguson—the legacy of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm, The Labour Club, 11 Leazes Park Rd, NE1 4PF

### NORWICH

#### How radical are the Greens?

Thu 12 Mar, 7.30pm, Vauxhall Centre, Johnson Place, NR2 2SA

### NOTTINGHAM

#### Ukip—the ugly face of politics

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, International Community Centre, 61b Mansfield Rd, NG1 3FN

### OXFORD

#### Pride, politics and protest—a revolutionary guide to LGBT liberation

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, Restore, Manzil Way (off Cowley Rd), OX4 1YH

### PORTSMOUTH

#### Sylvia Pankhurst—socialist and feminist

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, Somerstown Central, Rivers St, PO5 4EY

### ROTHERHAM

#### How do we fight Ukip?

Wed 25 Mar, 7pm, Bridge Inn, Greasbrough Rd (near bus and train stations), S60 1RB

### SOUTHAMPTON

#### A Rebel's Guide to Eleanor Marx

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, High Street Cafe, 153 High St, SO14 2BT

### SWANSEA

#### The myth of personal life under capitalism

Thu 5 Mar, 7.30pm, Brynmill Community Centre, St Albans Rd, SA2 0BP

### WIGAN

#### International Women's Day—Marxism and the struggle for women's liberation

Wed 4 Mar, 7pm, Sunshine House Community Centre, Bradshawgate, Vauxhall Rd, Scholes, WN1 3LU

### WOLVERHAMPTON

#### AND WALSALL

#### Putin, Ukraine and the West—are we heading for a new Cold War?

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, Grain Store, King St, WV1 1ST

### YORK

#### Pride, politics and protest—a revolutionary guide to LGBT liberation

With author Laura Miles. Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm, Sea Horse Hotel, 4 Fawcett Street, YO10 4AH

## { MOVEMENT EVENTS }

### DORCHESTER

#### Corruption and corporations—can capitalism be cleaned up?

Sat 7 Mar, 1.30pm, Colliton Club (opposite County Hall), Colliton Park, DT1 1XJ.

Organised by Dorset Socialists

### LONDON

#### Pride, politics and protest

Film and discussion with Gethin Roberts and Nicola Field. Fri 27 Feb, 6.30pm, Book



# How striking images can shape the way we view human rights

The new Human Rights Human Wrongs exhibition at the Photographers' Gallery in London places iconic news images in context, writes **Michelle Adhemar**

**THE PHOTOJOURNALISM** in this exhibition is vastly wide ranging. More than 200 images show conflict, war and struggle around the world between 1945 and the early 1990s.

The exhibition seeks to present the photographed events in a global context rather than as isolated incidents.

You see the Salvadoran Civil War, support for the Hunger Strikers in Northern Ireland, South African Apartheid, riots in Chicago, Martin Luther King being arrested and Che Guevara, among many other images.

The curator Mark Sealy says he aims to show a different side to the history that has been recorded to "unhinge our so-called definitive moments and set them in a wider, more relative framework".

Sealy also includes photographs of Nobel Peace Prize winners. They include Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat and US president Jimmy Carter. Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Min—who declined the prize—is also pictured.

## Harrowing

The portraits look out of place and uncomfortable among the harrowing images. Presumably, that is the aim.

The exhibition aims to tell us something about how historical events have been recorded and framed by the Western media.

Most of these images have been captured by North American or European photographers.

There are many iconic photographs here. But the exhibition also includes other shots that were taken at the same time. It shows what else was going on and so what was excluded from the famous image.

This does show us an alternative



**CONGOLESE NATIONALIST** Ambrose Boimbo grabbing the king of Belgium's ceremonial sword as he arrives for the country's independence ceremony in 1960

PICTURE: ROBERT LEBECK/THE BLACK STAR COLLECTION/RYERSON IMAGE CENTRE

view but only in a very limited sense. Where there are no alternative photographs or stories displayed it is difficult to see exactly how the Western media has shaped our understanding of events.

The exhibition is daunting and deeply upsetting. Image after image shows human suffering, pain and anguish.

There is often no caption to the photos with minimal notes about

what the photo is depicting and no analysis of what led to the event.

No solution is offered for how we fight the human wrongs depicted.

In an interview with the gallery Sealy comments that he "wants people to be politicised" in the space. It is a worthy goal.

But it's hard to imagine that by looking at pictures alone a person will become politicised.

The exhibition is ambitious,

showing a vast volume of photographs that depict important and forgotten history.

It is definitely worth a visit but without words and analysis it is a harrowing set of images that can debilitate rather than politicise.

**Human Rights Human Wrongs**  
Photographers Gallery,  
16-18 Ramillies Street, London W1F 7LW  
Until 6 April. Admission free.  
thephotographersgallery.org.uk

## A snapshot of the forces that shaped Ukraine's crisis

### FILM

#### MAIDAN

Directed by Sergei Loznitsa  
Out now

**THIS** documentary begins with a shot of a massive crowd gathered in a square. This is Maidan (independence) square in the Ukrainian capital Kiev at the peak of the movement against the government.

The square became an international symbol and was the scene of many battles with the police.

Ukrainian director

Sergei Loznitsa's film shows rather than tells.

His style is rooted in the Russian avant garde tradition. There is no main narrator and the footage of events doesn't cut to explanatory interviews.

So we are not told what the opening scene is. Later a credit says the crowd has gathered in support of closer ties with the European Union (EU).

But there is a glimpse of why the early protests inspired so many people and why they brought ordinary people onto the streets. Over the



The crowd in the square

left anthem Bella Ciao a woman's voice can be heard through the speakers, "Goodbye riot police... and venal judges."

The film moves on to less inspiring but necessary activities in the makeshift headquarters, right down to the organisation of soup kitchens.

But there are also signs of the direction the movement was going in. This crowd begins to sing the Ukrainian national anthem.

Meanwhile, in the crowd, we can see a few blue flags

with the yellow fist of the fascist Svoboda party.

This shows illusions in the EU and Ukrainian nationalism which would allow the right to come out on top.

Loznitsa's style is refreshing, revealing much more than hacks reported at the time.

But it is also frustrating. He may be trying to give some agency back to the "crowd" as a collective. But the style can make the fascinating film difficult to follow. It makes it hard to discern political nuances.

Tomáš Tengely-Evans

### FILM

#### HINTERLAND

directed by Harry Macqueen  
Out now

**TWO FRIENDS** go on a road trip through Cornwall. The story focuses on their personal relationship, but also aims to comment on wider politics.

Harry Macqueen wrote and directed *Hinterland*. He also stars in it alongside folk singer Lori Campbell. It is his first film as a director.



Roaming the Hinterland

### EXHIBITION

#### HISTORY IS NOW: 7 ARTISTS TAKE ON BRITAIN

Hayward Gallery, London  
Until 26 April  
southbankcentre.co.uk

WHERE IS Britain culturally in the run-up to the general election?

Through a display of more than 250 objects seven artists will try and answer this. They will look at issues including Cold War, post-Thatcherite society, protest movements, feminism, BSE and celebrity culture.

John Akomfrah, Simon Fujiwara, Roger Hiorns, Hannah Starkey, Richard Wentworth and Jane and Louise Wilson have each curated one section.

### MUSIC



The Staple Singers

#### FREEDOM HIGHWAY COMPLETE

The Staple Singers  
Legacy. Released 3 March

THE CLASSIC funky gospel concert has been remastered and expanded for its 50th anniversary. It was recorded in Chicago in April 1965, just after the Civil Rights victory at Selma.

Religious songs mix with We Shall Overcome and Freedom Highway, written specially to commemorate Selma.



**T**HE uprisings that exploded across the Middle East and north Africa from the end of 2010 inspired people across the world who want a better society.

But four years after this “Arab Spring”, those revolutions have faced serious setbacks or been crushed.

In Egypt, a counter-revolution led by the military dictatorship of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has launched a brutal crackdown on any opposition.

And in Syria, the revolution has degenerated into a bloody and seemingly endless civil war between the fragmented brigades of the Free Syrian Army, the Syrian regime and the viciously sectarian Islamists Isis.

This was the context for a conference organised by the Egyptian Solidarity Initiative in London earlier this month.

Joseph Daher, an activist from the Syrian Revolutionary Left Current, spoke at the conference.

He described how attempts by Bashar al-Assad’s regime to divide the revolution had paved the way for the growth of Isis.

“The Syrian regime tried to present the revolution as a Sunni uprising,” he said. “It crushed the democratic secular activists of the Syrian revolution.

“At the same time it liberated all of the different Salafist reactionary people and groups from prisons. This allowed Isis to expand in Syria.”

Joseph explained that the deliberate encouragement of sectarianism proves that it is wrong to see conflict between religious groups as the product of centuries-old disagreements.

He said, “Sectarianism is something that has been believed to have existed throughout history in the Middle East and North Africa.

### Dispute

He ridiculed the idea that “hatred between Sunnis and Shias is because they had a dispute 1,000 years ago, and that therefore what you have in Iraq and Lebanon is a consequence of this.”

Instead he argued sectarianism is a policy “used the by the ruling class and the bourgeoisie to put aside any kind of social class perspective.”

And he also blamed the growth of Isis on the effects of Western imperialism, particularly in Iraq.

“You can look at the Quran and the history of hundreds of years and you won’t find a reason for Isis as some racists try to do,” he said. “But you can find its origins notably in Western imperialism.

“We can’t understand Isis without coming back to the history of Iraq.

“We can’t forget the ten years



# COULD THE ARABSPRING RISE AGAIN?

Socialists Joseph Daher from Syria and Sameh Naguib from Egypt spoke at a recent conference about the situation four years on from the Arab Spring, writes Nick Clark



Bashar al-Assad

of sanctions, and the British-US invasion in 2003 that completely destroyed the fabric of Iraqi society.

“The policy of the US was to enforce a sectarian political system in Iraq. And the US played a humongous role by repressing trade unionists and implementing neoliberal policies.”

Joseph said that a popular movement against the US-backed regime of Nouri al-Maliki could have allowed



**Egypt’s leaders say, ‘Yes, we’re not particularly democratic right now’**

the Iraqi people to unite across religious lines.

But when the movement was crushed, Isis was able to move in.

“Between 2011 and 2013 in Iraq you had different popular movements,” said Joseph. “These movements tried to create a kind of national perspective which different communities could join.

“But they were crushed through sectarianism and Maliki’s repression, especially

towards the Sunni minority.

“Isis started to expand after the crushing of the popular movement.

“They were able to appeal to the frustration of a section of the Sunni minority.”

Joseph argues that because of this, fighting Isis also means taking on imperialism and the regimes that use sectarianism to crush revolt.

“The way to fight Isis is definitely not by bombing it. This is partly how it was created—by Western imperialism and Western bombing.

“The fight against Isis cannot be reduced to simply Isis—we also have to fight the regimes of our region.”

Egypt is the most powerful regime. It was also the state where the power of the revolutionary opposition developed furthest.

**E**GYPTIAN revolutionary socialist Sameh Naguib also spoke at the conference. He agreed that the rise of Isis and sectarianism was linked to failure of the revolutions to break through.

He explained that the defeat of the Egyptian revolution is one of the reasons that Isis has been able to grow.

“Isis comes in the context of a counter-revolution. It comes in the context of the failed revolutions”, he said.

“When these revolutions did not achieve their aims—you start getting Isis.

“There is a connection between Sisi on the one hand and the theatre of cruelty that you find in Isis. The more violent and horrible he becomes the more violent and horrible they become.”

In turn, the Sisi regime has been able to point to the atrocities carried out by Isis in Iraq and Syria to divide Coptic Christians and Muslims in Egypt. It’s also using them to justify its own repressive measures against the opposition.

“The argument is simple, and Sisi comes out and says it openly,” Sameh explained.

“He says, ‘Do you want to be like Syria? Look at what’s happening to the Christians in Syria. In Iraq most Christians have left or been killed.’

### Threat

“That is why Sisi in nearly all of his speeches now talks about the Copts, and talks about the army protecting Copts. He talks about Islamists being a threat to national unity.

“So you have something that was central to the revolution—an anti-sectarian, secular side of the Egyptian revolution—destroyed.”

The association with Isis is extended to anyone who opposes the regime.

“They openly say, ‘Yes, we’re not particularly democratic right now. We have a security problem, there is terrorism.

face this threat is by letting the army do its job.’

“Therefore not only are the Muslim Brotherhood Isis, but anybody who stands against the army is Isis.

“Anybody who tries to say we want democratic rights, we want workers’ rights is Isis, is Muslim Brotherhood, is trying to destroy the country.”

### Rebuild

For Sameh, the answer is to attempt to rebuild the revolutionary movement.

“In the early days of the revolution a main feature of the big demonstrations was that Christians were a central aspect of what was happening,” he recalled.

“This meant that the movement had a secular democratic aspect to it that made it impossible for Islamists, for example, to separate the two communities.”

Despite the brutality of the Sisi regime, Sameh says there is still potential to challenge it. He explained that the military regime is not as strong as it appears.

“The counter-revolution is in trouble. It’s able to carry out all this violence against the Egyptian people, against the Muslim Brotherhood, against other opposition forces.

“But Sisi relies completely upon the old regime. This is a serious problem for him, but it was exactly that machinery that caused the revolution.”

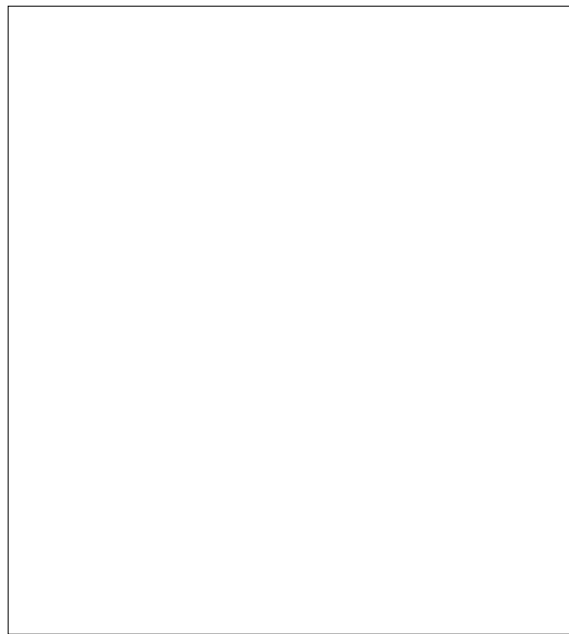
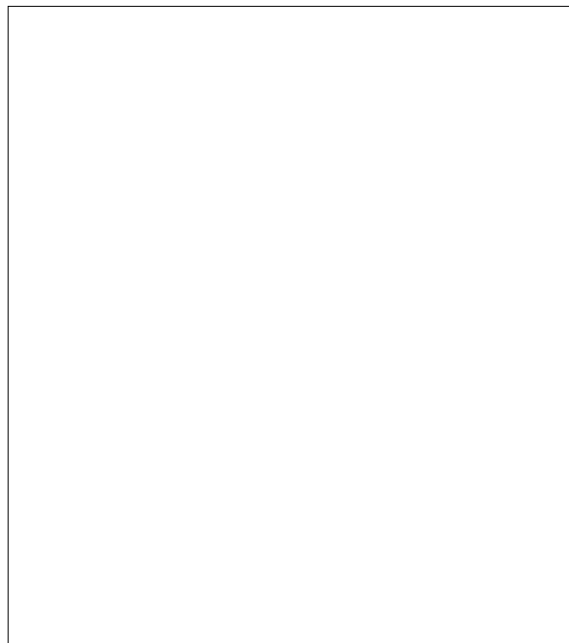
**N**EITHER are the events of 2011 forgotten by the Egyptian people. “Hundreds of thousands of young people experienced an actual revolution. This experience has not evaporated,” Sameh said.

“And we see bursts happening all the time. These bursts are happening because the regime is in trouble.

“For example on the anniversary of the beginning of the Egyptian revolution there were demonstrations of tens of thousands of young people in a working class district of Cairo.

“The demonstrations were so unexpectedly big that they were able to break through police lines—the first time since the original revolution of 2011.”

But there are also



**CHRISTIANS were central to Egypt’s 2011 revolution (top). But now Sisi presents himself as their defender from Isis (above)**



dangers. The Egyptian state responded to the anniversary demonstrations with brutality.

Police fired birdshot at protesters, while snipers fired down on the demonstrations from helicopters.

At least 18 people were killed.

Sameh says this emphasises the need to learn from the mistakes made during the previous revolution.

“We need a lot of political work to prepare for the next revolution,” he said.

“There are coming episodes in this revolution and we need to learn from our mistakes and from our weaknesses if we are going to succeed in the next revolution.”

## READ MORE

● **Bread, Freedom, Social Justice: Workers and the Egyptian Revolution** by Anne Alexander and Mostafa Bassiouny, £16.99

● **The Egyptian Revolution** a political analysis and eyewitness account in a pamphlet by Sameh Naguib, £3.00

● **Isis and counter-revolution: towards a Marxist analysis** by Anne Alexander, International Socialism journal 145 bit.ly/1ArWkJ9

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to [bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)



## COMMENT

# Don’t let Tories use racism to attack abortion rights

Judith Orr warns that the anti-abortionists’ latest sneaky attempt to undermine women’s right to choose won’t be the last



PROTESTING FOR abortion rights

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## BACK STORY

**The Abortion Rights campaign organises to defend and extend women’s access to abortion**

● It described Bruce’s amendment as “the worst attack on abortion rights since 2008”

● Local groups have opposed bigots “protesting” outside abortion clinics

● It will hold a general meeting in London on Saturday 28 March

● See website for details

framed as helping women who Bruce claims are being forced to abort if they find out their foetus is female.

But Bruce does not care about women. Her amendment would have led to doctors racially profiling women and reporting them if they suspected their motives for wanting an abortion.

Asian women might worry that doctors might question their motives for an abortion more than someone else.

There is no evidence that sex selection abortion is



**Any attack on women’s right to access abortion has to be opposed**

happening in Britain. In 2013 the Department of Health studied sex ratios and found “no group is statistically different from the range that we would expect to see naturally occurring”.

Yet spinning this legislation as progressive won’t give it some support, even initially from some pro-choice politicians.

If a woman is facing pressure to have an abortion, making her a criminal won’t help her. Forcing women to carry a pregnancy is not fighting women’s oppression.

For the first time since the 1967 Abortion Act, the amendment used language that shifts the law away from the woman and her rights.

Currently doctors just need to consider a pregnant woman’s “physical or mental health”. The amendment posed abortions as a crime against the “unborn child” or “girl”.

This would have been a very dangerous precedent. It would treat women as walking incubators.

Women will have different reasons for seeking abortions, all should be respected.

The law is already hugely restrictive—abortion is the only procedure requiring the approval of two doctors.

Any attack on abortion rights must be opposed. Criminalising abortion does not stop it—it pushes it back to the back streets.

The Tory government has given renewed confidence to anti-abortion bigots. We need to mobilise to stop them, because they will be back. [abortionrights.org.uk](http://abortionrights.org.uk)



# 'We will put politics back into Pride'

by NICOLA FIELD

THE 30TH anniversary of the 1984/85 miners' strike has reconnected millions of us who took part in that great struggle. And it is inspiring younger people to fight back today.

For me, this is crystallised through the impact of the hit film *Pride*.

I and other former members of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) have spoken at screenings about the film's true story.

Responses have been passionate. Students have asked how we fight oppression today while one teenager took the lesson that "we need more unity in the world".

He is right—and so LGSM has reformed to issue a radical invitation to the entire left.

We want to create, with you, a huge political contingent of trade unionists, students and supporters at this year's Pride march on 27 June in London. All are welcome, regardless of sexuality.

LGSM will lead the contingent with a replica of its original banner, alongside miners currently



Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners on the 1985 Pride march in London

PICTURE: COLIN CLEWS/WWW.GAYINTHE80S.COM

facing closure at Kellingley in Yorkshire. We will be calling for solidarity against cuts, oppression and hate crime.

LGSM founder member Mike said, "The Pride committee have helped pay to get a marching band up from South Wales."

"It's a commemoration of Pride 85, the year when the march

was led by LGSM, a band and miners' union banners.

"This year is going to be even bigger. It will be a blast!"

Commercialisation has dominated the Pride march over recent decades—but sexual liberation and solidarity are vital for everyone.

Thankfully, the LGBT movement

now includes bisexual, transgender and intersex people. To succeed it must involve all who oppose homophobia.

Reggie, also from the original LGSM group, said, "The Pride committee really welcomed our idea. The TUC is a major sponsor."

"The 2015 theme is 'Heroes' and our initiative can help make Pride

much more political. Anyone can sign up via the Facebook event 'Pride in London'."

LGSM also has new recruits. Ida had seen the *Pride* film and spotted us in our T-shirts in a pub.

She said, "We got talking about benefit cuts, unemployment and zero hours contracts. LGBT people are not separate, we are part of working class struggle."

"I hope to get my Unite union branch banner to the march."

Unison member Denis found us through Facebook and is now helping LGSM use social media to spread our message of unity.

"The film *Pride* was a revelation to me," he said.

"I'm active in Unite Against Fascism and Stand Up To Ukip, and I like the idea that people can reach out unconditionally to others facing injustice. An injury to one is an injury to all, whether it's racism, job cuts or eviction."

"We may have gay marriage but we still have violent homophobia. We have to stand up together for what is right."

Help LGSM build our Solidarity contingent. Join Facebook group LGSM Pride 2014; on Twitter follow @LGSMpride. Our Trade and Students' Union resolution is at [bit.ly/17uoJEb](http://bit.ly/17uoJEb)

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# Resistance is mounting to attacks on our homes

Tenants and campaigners fighting social cleansing on London estates spoke to **Dave Sewell** about their battles against the bailiffs, cops and councils

**COUNCIL HOUSING** is under attack. Thousands of homes are being demolished to make way for “regeneration” as private housing.

The vast Aylesbury estate in south London became a battleground last week as Southwark Council went to war with a group of occupiers in empty flats.

Teams of contractors were sent to put up high wooden and metal fences around whole blocks.

Bailiffs laid siege to one building, having already smashed up fixtures in another. Police fought, harassed and arrested protesters long into the night on Tuesday of last week.

Occupiers have since been inundated with solidarity with visitors bringing hot food and water.

One occupier told Socialist Worker, “Many of those visitors live on the estate and tell us how glad they are that somebody is making a stand against the council.”

Aysen Dennis has been a council tenant on the Aylesbury for 22 years, and has been campaigning against its demolition for 15 of them.

“I count myself as part of the occupation, even if I’m not staying there,” she told Socialist Worker.

“We don’t want to leave. But it’s a prime location in London. The council wants the place for rich yuppies and to send us to the outskirts of the city.”

The Aylesbury has been used as a symbol of deprivation and poverty. This has helped make the case for getting rid of it—along with 50 other council estates around London.

But tenant Marcus Suitor said, “The place is being allowed to fall into disrepair.

“It makes people not want to live



**COPS ON the Aylesbury (top) tenant Aysen (left)**

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

here any more. But we’re in a housing crisis.

“To people with nowhere to go this makes no sense.”

Aysen said, “One family in the block has had no heating for months and can’t get the council to fix it.

“Despite this people always say they don’t want to leave—they just want the council to do its job.”

Refurbishing the homes would be a big job which the council says it can’t afford. But knocking them down and rebuilding would cost far more.

The difference is that private

developers can get onboard that way—and expect handsome returns.

It is the same story in other councils and with London Tory mayor Boris Johnson’s plan for the whole capital.

The new estate is to be denser—but with only a few council homes.

Aysen said, “Everywhere council housing is under attack.

“Even ‘social housing’ has meant higher rents and tenancies that make it easier to evict people.”

“They should build more council housing instead of privatising what we have.”



**‘We will fight until the end’**

**DEFEND Council Housing (DCH)** has called a protest for the Aylesbury on Saturday 14 March. Aysen said, “We are leafletting and petitioning for it. “We are going to fight them to the end. We will never give up.” [bit.ly/1AXSlk4](http://bit.ly/1AXSlk4)

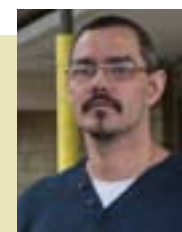


**Facing down the threats**

**THE FIRST** time the council tried to have the Aylesbury demolished was in 2001.

Tenants and DCH campaigned and won a ballot against it. Aysen remembers, “One guy from the council’s team said, ‘you haven’t won—we are coming back’.

“Since then they have spent the estate budget on magazines to lie to tenants about demolition—and haven’t been doing any basic maintenance or repairs.”



**‘Bedroom tax is killing me’**

**MARCUS** (pictured) from the Aylesbury has been hit hard by the bedroom tax.

“The cost is killing me,” he said.

“They’ve said it’ll take a year to find me a smaller flat.

“But I can see empty one and two bed flats in this very estate.”

## ‘Why aren’t we good enough for these new places?’

**ARINOLA Adefuwa** was supposed to lose her home on Thursday of last week.

But landlords the charity Guinness Trust did a U-turn in the face of protests.

“I’ve been a tenant here for ten years,” Arinola told Socialist Worker. “If the bailiffs come for me I’ll have nowhere to go.”

Tenants and supporters occupied an empty flat on the estate in Brixton, south London, for six days before the planned eviction.

Arinola’s eviction was to have been over rent arrears, but Guinness has had to promise all tenants a payoff that would have made these irrelevant.

Tenants saw this instead as an attempt to start the process of getting rid of all of them.

A court ruling on Wednesday of last week gave Guinness a pretext to back down from the eviction.

But tenants believe their protests are responsible.

They have already forced Guinness to change

its position several times.

First it claimed to have no obligation to tenants and would leave them to find homes in the private sector.

### Apply

Then it said they could apply for other Guinness Trust properties, but only outside London. Now they have relented on this too.

Another tenant, Ellisha, said, “We’ve been making progress. But they’ve only given us a very short window. If we’ve not found anywhere by April

they’ll evict us. They’re setting us up for failure. They need to offer us a property, not just say we’re entitled to a tenancy if we find one.”

Tenants fear they won’t be able to stay in the area if redevelopment goes ahead.

In Brixton this has the added edge that it is mainly black tenants who will be forced out.

Ellisha said, “They could have housed us by now. So why are they trying to get rid of us?”

“Why aren’t we good

enough to live in these new places? It’s social cleansing, and there is something discriminatory about it.”

Resistance is putting landlords on the back foot. But people still have a fight on their hands.

As Guinness Trust tenants rallied on Thursday of last week, tenant Betty said, “The battle’s not over.

“The threat is still hanging over us to be evicted with nowhere to go. The pressure has to continue.”



## IN BRIEF

**ITV workers move towards pay strike**

WORKERS AT ITV could be set to ballot to strike over pay after bosses refused to back down during talks last week.

Members of the Unite, NUJ and Bectu unions voted overwhelmingly to reject a below-inflation pay increase of 2 percent earlier this year.

ITV posted profits of more than 40 percent in the first half of 2014.

And ITV chief executive Adam Crozier awarded himself an £8.4 million bonus in 2013.

The action could affect ITV's election coverage if workers vote to strike.

**Meeting demands fast food rights**

AROUND 40 people attended a public meeting on fair pay organised by the Fast Food Rights campaign in Newcastle last week.

Speakers at the meeting included BFAWU president Ian Hodson as well as Northern Region TUC Secretary Beth Farhat and Labour MP Dave Anderson. ●fastfoodrights.wordpress.com

**Justice activists target law summit**

LEGAL CAMPAIGNERS held a protest against attacks on access to justice on Monday of this week.

The Justice Alliance called a protest against the Global Law Summit, which is looking at what links can be made between business and the "rule of law".

The protest was part of the Relay for Rights to commemorate the signing of the Magna Carta nearly 800 years ago.

●justiceallianceuk.wordpress.com

**Join the protest against rail bosses**

BARNSELY FREEDOM Riders will travel to York on Monday of next week to protest at Northern Rail headquarters and hold a rally in the town.

They are protesting at cuts to free travel for older and disabled people, which were brought in last year.

●Assemble Mon 2 March, 12.15pm, 9 Rougier St, YO 6HZ

**No to attacks on disabled people**

DISABLED PEOPLE Against Cuts (Dpac) have called a protest against the return of the Work Capability Assessment.

The Maximus firm has taken on carrying out the assessments from Atos.

Activists plan to protest outside their offices in London next Monday at 1pm.

They will also hold a national day of action against Maximus.

●For more information go to dpac.uk.net

## FIGHTING THE CUTS



TRADE UNION and community campaigners protest in Glasgow

PICTURE: DUNCAN BROWN

# Fury as councils push through further cuts

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

AS ANTI-CUTS protests took place across Britain last week a nightmare vision of the future of local services came from Northamptonshire.

The county council voted to outsource all services, make £68 million in cuts and transfer almost 4,000 staff to four new bodies.

The move mirrors the project of Tory-controlled Barnet Council in north London but goes a bit further.

Northamptonshire Tory council leader Jim Harker says the four new bodies "would be free to win contracts with other organisations and generate additional income".

Meanwhile over 300 trade union and community campaigners protested as Labour-run Glasgow City Council voted through £29 million cuts.

These included cuts to mental health services, social work funding, housing support for the elderly and education services for children in hospital.

Opposition Scottish National Party councillors proposed an alternative cuts budget less swingeing than Labour's but would have still cut services.

In other worrying moves, at Labour-run Islington Council in north London a new council trading arm "iCo" has been proposed to sell "marketable" in-house expertise.

**Protest**

Local unions and anti-cuts groups in Islington were set to protest this week against £37 million cuts and 200 redundancies, half of which will be compulsory.

Coventry saw around 250 people march against the Labour-led city council's proposed cuts last Saturday

ahead of a vote this week.

Some 1,000 workers face being axed on top of cuts to services and raising council tax.

At Tory-run Worcestershire County Council workers have rejected attacks on their terms and conditions as part of £25 million cuts a year.

The Tories want to cut redundancy payments by a third and extend mandatory unpaid leave of three days a year to 2020.

They also want to slash pay protection for workers who take lesser-paid jobs after a restructure from three years to just 18 months.

And in Milton Keynes Labour's £22 million cuts budget was rejected by opportunist Tory and Lib Dem councillors but only because Labour never had a majority in the room.

Another meeting is being convened to ram the cuts through as soon as possible.

## PRISON OFFICERS

## No-strike deal with POA?

THE SCOTTISH National Party (SNP) government in Scotland has agreed what is in effect a £7 million no-strike deal with the Prison Officers Association (POA).

Some 3,500 prison officers are set to receive a £2,000 bonus, representing between 4.7 to 6.2 percent of pay a year.

POA Scotland chair Phil Fairlie says claims of a no-strike deal are "wide of the mark". Yet it was "crystal clear" to POA members that should they accept the bonus "we would not be balloting for strike action on this issue through the existing pay deal period".

Unlike England and Wales prison officers in Scotland have a legal right to strike.

Trade unionists have reacted angrily to the deal.

STUC general secretary Grahame Smith described it as "totally unacceptable"

STUC head Grahame Smith

for the SNP or any employer to "bribe" workers to give up the right to strike.

It is hypocrisy for the SNP to criticise the Tories' attack on trade unionists' right to strike while making this deal.

The Labour Party criticised the POA deal. But Smith pointed out they "should also be prepared to commit to repeal in full the legislation that removes the right of prison officers elsewhere in the UK to strike".

## ANTI-RACISM

## Ukip racists targeted

ANTI-RACISTS HELD a lively protest outside a Ukip public meeting in Bradford Upon Avon on Friday of last week.

Ukip's leaflet billed this as a meeting for the countryside. It was pro-fracking, and anti-wind farms and renewable energy.

Our posters highlighted the fact that migrants are not responsible for the crisis or the austerity measures and we must not let the racism of Ukip divide us.

The organisers of the meeting went to great lengths to try to persuade us that Ukip was not a racist party.

We challenged this,

citing examples of recent comments from their councillors or MEPs.

Needless to say they were unable to cite anything from their policies or their activities that concretely demonstrated their anti-racism.

We must continue to highlight Ukip's racism and the scapegoating of migrants for the economic crisis.

We must also spell out its other policies like privatisation of the NHS, opposition to equal rights for gay people and massive expansion in military spending.

Celia Hollingworth

## HOUSING

## Haringey march against redevelopment

COUNCIL TENANTS and supporters marched on Haringey Civic Centre in north London on Monday of this week in protest against redevelopment plans.

Haringey council wants to knock down up to 4,800 homes on council estates—including the famous Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham.

These would be replaced by higher density developments mostly run by the private sector and at much higher rents and prices.

The Lordship Recreation ground would also be built on.

There are also plans for a consultation on the future management of Haringey's 19,000 council homes.

There's the possibility that the council may revisit the idea of time-limited tenancies for future council tenants.

Jenny Sutton is the



Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham, north London

Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) parliamentary candidate for Tottenham in the general election.

She told Socialist Worker, "The council wants to 'regenerate' by kicking out the poor."

"Instead of opposing austerity they are trying to manage it, with a cynical plan

to bring people with more disposable income into the borough to boost business rates.

"It comes down to social cleansing.

"What we need is council housing—and mobilisations of the unions and the community to make sure we get it."

Dave Sewell

●defendcouncilhousing.org.uk

## MAYOR'S BUDGET

## Opposing Boris's budget

PROTESTERS blocked the entrance to London's City Hall on Monday of this week as Tory mayor Boris Johnson prepared to present his budget.

They carried cut-outs and models of tower blocks in protest at Johnson's attacks on council housing.

The mayor of London controls a budget of £1.8 billion for delivering new homes, and holds a land portfolio that covers over 500 hectares.

All these hectares of Greater London Authority-owned land are being sold to private property developers that will restrict access to housing for most Londoners.

The budget will hand over even bigger profits for greedy landlords and developers.

The protest on Monday

The protest was coordinated by the Radical Housing Network and backed by Fuel Poverty Action, the Unite union, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition and others.

It was part of over a week of action which included the Love Council Housing day of action and protests for estate occupations (see page 17).



## CARE WORKERS

# Strike hits back at attacks on carers

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

**CARE WORKERS** in Barnet, north London, walked out for 48 hours on Tuesday of this week.

The strike was the latest in an ongoing pay dispute with outsourcer Your Choice Barnet (YCB) and the Tory-controlled council.

Unison union rep Keith told Socialist Worker, "We've had no pay rise for six years and they want us to take a 9.5 percent pay cut."

Tory-run Barnet Council bosses are intent on commissioning rather than providing local services.

Since setting up YCB as a local authority trading company in early 2012 staffing levels have been cut by a third.

The latest attack on workers' pay was supposed to be about saving £400,000 a year.

But the council is handing tens of millions of pounds in contracts to private firms such as Capita. The council's chief executive is currently paid £187,613 a year.

Bosses are refusing to back down and say workers must accept the pay cut, but the YCB strikers are strong.

Workers know the council will have to be forced to the



PICKETS AT Rosa Morrison day centre in Barnet, north London

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

negotiating table.

News of Malcolm Rifkind's claim that surviving on a MP's income is impossible only deepened the workers' sense of outrage at the attacks on their pay.

Keith said, "I have to work a second job, not for a nice holiday home in Tuscany but

just to survive.

"Rifkind should come and work here and see how he gets on."

YCB workers can beat the Tories in Barnet and push back the bosses' attacks, but they will need to escalate their action.

And trade unionists need

to rush solidarity to help them win.

●Send support and requests for speakers to contactus@barnetunison.org.uk. Donations to Barnet Unison Industrial Action Fund, Building 4, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP

## EDUCATION

# More strikes over Lewisham academies

by SADIE ROBINSON

**TEACHERS** AT four schools in Lewisham, south east London, are set to strike on Thursday of next week.

The walkout will be the latest action against threats to turn the schools into academies. NUT union members at Prendergast Hilly Fields, Ladywell Fields, Prendergast Vale and Sedgill School also struck on 12 February.

Workers hope NASUWT and GMB union members will join next week's walkout. The GMB ballot results were due as Socialist Worker went to press.

The battle to stop academies in Lewisham has huge support. Parents and students joined picket lines to show their support for the last strike.

●Messages of support to nut@lewisham.gov.uk



Parents and students joined the picket line earlier this month

PICTURE: ANDREW SMITH

## BARNSELY COLLEGE

# Walkout suspended

A FOUR-DAY strike by UCU union members at Barnsley College, Yorkshire, set to begin on Monday of this week, was suspended after bosses offered concessions at talks.

The workers are fighting a restructure that would downgrade jobs, push pay down and introduce performance-related pay.

The UCU members have held six days of action so far and voted to escalate to a four-day, followed by a five-day strike.

The suspension does not alter this.

A union meeting was set for Wednesday of this week.

●Please send messages of solidarity to lee.short1975@gmail.com

## FRACKING

# SNP under pressure over unconventional gas licences

NEARLY 30 organisations have written to Scottish National Party (SNP) government energy minister Fergus Ewing demanding that Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) is included in Scotland's fracking ban.

These include the Unison union, Friends of the Earth and many local campaign groups.

Private firms already have five exploratory licences to gasify coal under the Firth of Forth, on Scotland's east coast, and Firth of Solway, near the border with England.

UCG involves setting fire to undersea and other inaccessible coal seams, then blasting out the gas this produces in a process similar to fracking.

Opposition to fracking and other forms of unconventional gas exploration in Scotland is growing. This has led to the



Protesting last month

PICTURE: JOSH BROWN

SNP introducing a moratorium on fracking until after the general election—campaigners demand UCG is included in that.

Scotland has some of the best resources for wind, tidal and wave power in the world.

## CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

# Crossrail hit by more action

CAMPAIGNERS protested and blocked roads at the Whitechapel site of the Crossrail project in London on Monday of this week.

For the second time in a week a worker was sacked after raising health and safety concerns.

Last week saw a worker re-employed after protests at the Oxford Circus site.

Campaigners also held a silent vigil at the start of the inquest into the death of Rene Tkacik.

While working on Crossrail Rene was hit on the head by falling concrete from the tunnel's ceiling in Holborn in March last year.



Campaigners held a silent vigil

PICTURE: ALAN KENNY

## MAINTENANCE WORKERS



Workers on the picket line at Newport Pagnell depot on the M1

PICTURE: KATE HUNTER

# Amey workers maintaining battle with bosses over pay

MOTORWAY maintenance workers employed by Amey struck for 24 hours on Friday of last week and Monday of this week.

The Unite union members are in dispute over pay at depots in Newport Pagnell in Buckinghamshire, Breakspear at Hemel Hempstead, Whittlesford

in Cambridgeshire and Sandy depot in Bedfordshire.

Amey has offered workers a 1.75 percent pay deal but bosses' pay went up 65 percent in four years. Unite demands a 5 percent rise and has raised strike pay from £30 to £50 a day. Workers anticipate a long dispute.

Kate Hunter



## WE CAN BEAT LYING TORIES

A 24-hour strike by firefighters in England will have a big impact, but only sustained action can win their pensions dispute, writes **Annette Mackin**

**FURY AT Tory lies is behind the 24-hour walkout by firefighters set to take place on Wednesday of this week.**

Firefighters have been in a long-running dispute with the government over plans to rob them of their pension.

Under new proposals the Tories want them to work until they are 60, with the threat of losing up to half of their pension if they are sacked or forced to retire.

The latest walkout comes after firefighters said Tory fire minister Penny Mordaunt lied to parliament when their new pension legislation was voted through.

Mordaunt had guaranteed that firefighters aged 55 who failed a fitness test through no fault of their own would receive a full, unreduced pension or a redeployed role.

But when the firefighters' FBU union asked fire authorities if this guarantee would be implemented, they confirmed it wouldn't.

### Lies

Firefighters are sick Tories' constant lies.

A national demonstration was planned at parliament after they walk out of stations at 7am.

"Firefighters are angry and frustrated," Riccardo La Torre, Essex FBU brigade chair, told Socialist Worker.

"They feel they are being attacked on all fronts—nationally and locally. They've had enough of having their pockets picked.

"There needs to be a wider outcry over the lies of the government—a minister has given false information to attack a group of workers."

Mark Rowe, FBU brigade secretary for Merseyside, said, "The level of anger is high among firefighters. This is not just about our money—it's about safety.

"These changes will kill firefighters and ultimately



**FIGHTING ON—Firefighters on strike in south London last November**

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

members of the public."

As well as Wednesday's strike, Essex firefighters have called two walkouts next Sunday and Monday in an ongoing local dispute over attacks on their jobs.

Essex workers were locked out during their last strike in

January, and have had no guarantee that it will not happen again.

And fire bosses in Buckinghamshire have once again gone for striking firefighters by saying they will lock them out for 39 hours on Wednesday. This comes after

they sacked union activist Ricky Matthews in November last year for striking.

Dave Shek, FBU Ealing borough secretary in west London said this latest attack from Buckinghamshire fire bosses has angered workers even more.

He said that the union must act.

"Personally I think if there's a lockout of members in one area, straight away the rest of the country should be out as well to put real pressure on fire chiefs," he said.

Mark said, "It's disgraceful union busting. We'll be doing collections and sending down donations from Merseyside to support the Buckinghamshire workers."

### Outrage

Legal challenges for sackings can take up to two years to complete. Fire bosses hope the prolonged procedures will dissipate anger.

Firefighters have consistently shown they are up for a fight.

But the stop-start nature of the strikes has broken momentum and given confidence to the Tories and fire bosses. This can be seen in the latest vindictive moves by Buckinghamshire bosses.

Mark said, "We need to keep up the strikes as well as the legal and political aspects. The government and fire bosses hope to kick things into the long grass."

This dispute can be won—but it will take hard-hitting, escalated action to beat the Tories.

Mark said, "Our position is that whoever succeeds in the general election we need to continue the fight."

Dave agreed. He said, "We've been putting motions to the executive council calling for eight days. We need to escalate.

"I'll be pushing for more strikes in the run-up to the general election to put pressure on the government."

Charlie Brown, a firefighter in Millwall, east London, said "This is a fight for everyone, not just firefighters. It's teachers, NHS workers, students—we need to link everything together."

Meet a  
**TUSC**  
candidate

**Simon Hickman**  
Manchester Gorton

THE TRADE Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) will be standing parliamentary candidates across Britain in May's general election.

Firefighter Simon Hickman is standing in Manchester Gorton.

"Someone like me would have been considered a traditional Labour voter," Simon told Socialist Worker. "But I was absolutely sick of there being no party on offer for working class people."

He said, "A lot of people tell us they've given up on politics. They don't see anyone who speaks to them. So they find it really refreshing when they see us. Last week one person said 'He doesn't look like a toff—I can vote for him'."

The same arguments are going on inside the trade union movement.

### Unions

Simon said, "Unions give millions to Labour, but they have little say on its policies.

"Our union disaffiliated from Labour after our pay dispute with a Labour government. But the workers' movement needs its own political voice.

If Labour isn't it then we need something else."

Simon organised one of the biggest regional demonstrations in the dispute over firefighters' pensions.

But perhaps the biggest battle he has been in locally was against the cuts.

"We successfully fought to keep the library and swimming baths open here in Levenshulme," he said. "There have been devastating cuts in Manchester. Every NHS and council service is up for grabs. We want to bring the resistance together, and say we don't want to cut any of them."



Simon Hickman